

Boyfriend - Girlfriend Things

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Summary

Their friendship is forged in fire and built on years of trial and error, but when the lines between 'partner' and '*Partner*' are this blurred, it gets a little hard to see what is and isn't out-of-bounds. Especially when neither one really wants the boundaries in the first place.

OR

Uraraka Ochako is not dating Bakugo Katsuki, but A Bitch Can Pretend, right?

Notes

Oh shit she writes somewhat-serious romance too!!!! She Has The Range

This is gonna be a fairly short-ish multichap affair, no major plots or fight scenes here y'all. I just wanted to write about Katsuki and Ochako getting gifts for each other and being Stupid and In Love.

Keep an eye out for minor KiriMina, past TodoMomo, and past one-sided IzuOcha. Not enough to be tagged, but they're there.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Chapter 1

Ochako had reached a point in her life when she stopped questioning the insanity that tended to pop up around herself and her classmates and just roll with it.

You stayed alive and out of the hospital longer that way, and why waste precious seconds that could be spent *moving* instead of questioning? Some of her classmates had already figured out the art of doing both at the same time - talented jerks, she loves them all so much - but Ochako tended to just move and figure her shit out on the fly. Plans came to her in bursts; less a neat list of checkpoints and more an '*And then?*' style improv exercise. It worked for her; made her quick and unpredictable on the battlefield, and had saved her own - and her friends' - lives many a-time.

Why that particular '*Step one: Roll with it, Step Two: Profit???*' mindset had decided to kick on during a shopping trip with the other 3-A girls was the insane part she wasn't going to bother to question. It wasn't *all* life or death stuff, you know? Sometimes it was just a result of living with nineteen other superpowered teenagers. She didn't question the way her train of thought had completely jumped the track- she just walked quietly into the men's section. Making a beeline towards the rack that had caught her eye.

She, like the rest of her classmates, had started getting paid at the top of the year for their work at their internships. It was one of the perks of being not only third-years, but semi-famous ones at that. Ochako hadn't hesitated to start quietly saving and investing her new source of income, and soon, she was able to call her parents to tell them that not only did they no longer have to worry about sending her an allowance every month for food and other necessities, but that *she* would be sending *them* money now. Her mother had cried and her dad had tried to reassure her they didn't need the extra cash, but Ochako had insisted.

(She had sent off the very first check that same day, and Deku and Iida both had to hug Ochako at the post box for an hour as she cried in relief and joy for taking the next grand step towards her most precious dream.)

Still, all the years of being a savvy shopper and serial-couponer, on top of the recent help from Iida and Momo to learn the best ways to save and invest her new income, meant that even with the now-

regular checks she sent home to help her family, Ochako was sitting pretty on a neat little sum. Enough so that it hadn't taken Mina long at all to insist that Ochako deserved a little treat for all her hard work, and soon, a mall trip had been planned for one of the few weekends the girls all had free.

She'd only intended to get a few things, really. Some new running shoes, maybe a cute new set of pens or a new dress. But as they all walked through the department store, meandering in a way their lives as heroes-in-training usually didn't permit, Ochako's eyes had caught on a mannequin in the men's section and she had changed course without alerting the others.

It wasn't hard to find the right rack and she slowly ran her fingers over the smooth, silky fabric. It was a dark, charcoal-grey button up shirt with a subtle honeycomb pattern woven into the fabric with gossamer-thin gold thread. It caught the light beautifully, and when she turned the starched cuff inside out, the lining fabric was a deep maroon that almost looked too rich to touch. She did anyways, carefully smoothing the pad of her thumb across the fabric.

The mannequin wearing the shirt had the sleeves rolled up to the elbow, displaying the deep color, and the combination of the red and the confident pose the mannequin was striking had pulled at something low in her gut. The flush in her cheeks darkened. She wasn't really considering... Was she?

"There you are!" Ochako whipped her head around at the familiar voice, Mina bouncing towards her with a smile. There were several bags on her arms already, and Ochako knew instinctively that Mina had already overshot her own self-imposed budget and would not be stopping any time soon. "What'd you find, girl?"

"Oh! Um, nothing," Ochako said with a nervous laugh, fiddling with the sleeve of the shirt still hanging from the rack. "Just got distracted."

Mina pinned her with a disbelieving purse of her lips and a slow raise of one eyebrow as if to say "*Really?*". It was a dumb excuse; none of them let their guards down in public anymore, especially not when they were alone. Ochako sighed, turning back to flip through the racks. "Okay so it's something, but it's dumb. And probably a little weird," she admitted. *He* would certainly think it was odd.

"I *thrive* on weird, babe. Hit me," Mina said. She lifted the sleeve

Ochako had been playing with, cooing softly over the design. Taking a deep breath, Ochako paused her slow, distracted slide of shirts across the rack - looking through the sizes - to watch Mina from the corner of her eyes.

“Alright then. How weird would it be if I got this shirt for Bakugo?”

To her credit, Mina didn’t visibly react much at first. The corner of her mouth twitched like someone had tugged on it with a string, but she was *trying* to stay calm and casual, and Ochako appreciated that. “First of all, excellent choice,” she said, pulling a random size off the rod to inspect the garment a little closer. “These are *def* his colors. Secondly, do you think it’d be weird?”

Honestly? Only partially.

Her relationship with Bakugo was an odd one, forged in fire and built from a mutual misunderstanding of how to do anything less than ‘*floor it*’ when the chips were down. They’d been blips on each other’s radar since the Sports Festival way back in their first year, but the major turning point had been during a seemingly innocuous class exercise in second year when Mr. Aizawa had paired them off for Quirk training. As it turned out, their Quirks were *insanely* compatible. When the two had demolished half a city block in Ground Beta on the first day only kind-of intentionally, they had looked at each other amongst the rubble and grinned like devils.

It was the start of something that to this day, wasn’t easily defined.

They were unofficial partners on the battlefield, and almost-friends off of it (*‘Almost’* only because Bakugo refused on principle to acknowledge any friendly emotion that dared to take root in his brain). It had taken *months* of trial and error and screaming matches that Ochako refused to be ashamed of for them to find a balance that suited their wildly-different personalities, but by now it was second nature.

She trusted in his strategic prowess and natural ability to quote-unquote “fucking crush it” at anything he tried, and he trusted her to not only keep up with but *exceed* his and her own expectations when he counted on it. She was comfortable with his Quirk like it was her own, and vice versa. He didn’t hesitate to throw her around in class or in a fight, and it wasn’t unusual to find the two standing practically on top of each other in more casual settings, so used to being in each other’s space that they gravitated together. They interned together,

trained together, and on a couple occasions, spent the night in the hospital together.

Hell, they nearly had Todoroki and Deku beat when it came to who was best at silent communication. He read her like a book and she was fluent in Bakurage.

So no, her buying him a gift wasn't weird. She'd bought him things before, and so had he. They were close enough for that.

But an undeniably *nice* dress shirt? One that had caught her eye because the mental image of Bakugo with the sleeves rolled up, hands in his pockets, and that oh-so-rare crooked smile reserved only for a select few pulling at his sharp features, had made her heart trip and jump and *tug* in her chest?

That was weird. Down that road laid feelings and desires Ochako didn't *dare* voice or even *hint at* for fear of ruining the bizarre, special thing they had now.

"It seems... ugh, don't read into this," Ochako warned Mina flatly, "but doesn't it seem too... boyfriend-girlfriend-y to you? Buyin' him clothes?" Mina, master of all things boy-related, understood Ochako's vague point.

"Not at all! I get clothes for my boys all the time," she reassured. "Namely because they're all morons who couldn't dress themselves to save their lives, but no one makes a fuss about it. Hell, Ei picks out Bakugo's outfits sometimes."

"Yeah, that's not really helpin' your point. I don't think I will ever love a man as much as Kirishima loves Bakugo."

Mina snorted with laughter. "Fair," she said with a grin. She and Kirishima had been dating since second year, and her response to the epic bromance between the two was to fling herself into the middle of that particular beefy-teen-boy sandwich and get comfy. Kirishima had been *delighted*. Bakugo still threatened to kill her on a regular basis.

(Fooling absolutely no one, by the way; aside from perhaps Ochako herself, Mina was Bakugo's favorite girl in class, and the two ruled over their "squad of morons" - Bakugo's words, not hers - together like proud adoptive parents.)

Mina and Kirishima were both masters at easy platonic affection with Class 3-A's powderkeg, just like how Ochako herself was close enough

with *her* boys that it wasn't unusual to find them studying or napping in a tangled heap of limbs and bruises. But with Bakugo, Ochako couldn't find that easy rhythm. With him, everything was intense, a constant push and pull of maintaining the balance between them that they had cultivated in their time as almost-partners. There was... not quite *tension*, but there was *something* constantly between them, something that made her hyperaware of everything he was the moment he walked into a room. He lit up her senses like wildfire, and even in the quiet moments when they slid together like a matching set, she was constantly aware of every place they touched, every breath he took. One look from his faceted red eyes and her nerves lit up like a Christmas tree, nothing but *him* on her mind.

It was *actually maddening*. Hadn't she outgrown this whole boy-crazy phase?!

"I say go for it," Mina encouraged, grinning. "At worst, he thinks it's just a gift from a friend and we all move on with our lives a little more fashionably." Ochako blinked. *At worst?* That was the best case scenario!

"At best?" she asked cautiously. Mina hummed, putting the shirt back and pulling out her phone to check the time as innocently as she could.

"Bakugo realizes what a wonderful girlfriend you would be and admits he's crazy in love with you," she said casually, and Ochako threw a nearby t-shirt at her face.

"**MINA!**"

The other girl shrieked with laughter, holding up her hands in self defense. "I yield, I yield!" she choked out between snorts of laughter, golden eyes sparkling. "But seriously, do it! It's so cute, babe, he'll love it."

Still a little red in the face, Ochako hummed in thought, looking back at the shirt. It *would* look really good on him, and he *had* been complaining about not having any dress shirts that fit anymore. As third-years, half of their time not training or working was spent networking, and even Ochako was running out of ways to fancy up her one nice black dress for hero events.

"... Okay, I'm gonna do it," she said brightly, a small, determined grin on her face. Mina cheered, jumping up and down excitedly before pulling out her phone.

“Hell yeah, Chakochip! Here, lemme get Ei to find out his size~”

“Got it,” Ochako said, plucking a shirt from the rack and holding it against herself with a small nod. She glanced back at her friend and found Mina staring at her questioningly. “What?” she muttered, defensive.

“Did you just guess Bakugo’s size using yourself as a measuring stick?”

“Mina, I am clinging to that boy at least two hours out of every day for training or work; I could probably tell you his cup size at this point.”

Mina snorted again with laughter and Ochako could only grin in reply. Spoils in hand, the two made their way back to the group and Ochako waved to get their attention. Momo saw them first and melted in relief. “Oh good, you found her,” she said, gently cupping her graceful hands around Ochako’s cheeks once the two were close enough in a soothing motion that made Ochako sink into her hands. “You know better than to run off by yourself, Ochako,” Momo berated softly.

“Sorry, Mo,” Ochako said with a small, guilty smile. “Got distracted.”

“She’s buying a gift for Bakugo~” Mina sang as she passed the two, the little traitor snuggling up to Tooru and avoiding Ochako’s death glare. The other girls all began to talk or giggle at once, crowding close to get a better look at the shirt hanging from Ochako’s grip.

“Nice,” Kyoka hummed, picking at the shirt before giving it a nod. Momo had absolutely lit up, beaming brightly in a way that had other shoppers stopping to stare. God, she really was just unfairly beautiful. Ochako was going to melt into a puddle right at her feet.

“What a wonderful idea! We should all get the boys something,” she said enthusiastically, clapping her hands together. “They deserve a little treat for all their hard work. We can each take three!”

Ochako’s smile froze a bit on her face. Momo wasn’t wrong, persay, but... well, this had been about Ochako and Bakugo, not the class in general. Underneath the nerves about her present being too personal, part of her had delighted in it. It was a little taste of something *more*, something she would never be able to have, and it was kind of thrilling. Now it was just a group activity.

Kyoka, still standing next to Ochako, coughed into her fist. “Good idea, Mo, but uh, how about we split the rest between us five?” Ochako shot her a subtle, grateful look, to which Kyoka gave her a wink in reply. Momo blinked owlishly at the two before her color drained a bit and she covered her small gasp.

“Oh, gosh, you’re right, I shouldn’t-”

“It’s fine,” Ochako reassured, “you’re totally right. The guys deserve somethin’ nice. I just... I’m gonna sit this one out,” she said with a shrug, holding the shirt protectively. “I think one is enough for me.”

“Of course!” Momo said. “I’ll take four then, and we’ll split the rest up! Maybe we can even try getting something for someone we don’t know as well!” Ha. Like there was anyone in the class Ochako didn’t know better than half her blood relatives.

“Oh my god please let me take Kouda, I saw the *cutest* beanie a few stores back that would be *perfect for him*,” Tooru gushed.

“I’ll take Todoroki! He mentioned needing a new notebook, I can get that,” Mina cut in quickly, taking the pressure off of Momo to possibly get a present for her ex. The recent break up had been mutual, but Momo was still a little emotionally raw after (first heartbreaks tended to do that, Ochako knew), and the girls had been quietly supporting her while she got back on her feet. The taller girl visibly relaxed, some of the tension unwinding off her shoulders.

With only a little negotiating and haggling over who got who, the girls had settled on their choices and quickly began plotting out the rest of their trip. Ochako broke away long enough to go pay for the shirt, making sure to get a gift receipt just in case her guesstimate about his size was wrong, although she doubted it. Still, better safe than sorry.

The rest of the trip was exactly the fun, relaxed kind of day Ochako had been needing recently. There was no shortage of laughter or goofing off as they went from shop to shop, at least two girls always within reaching distance. Mina and Tooru dragged Ochako into several dressing rooms with them, dressing up the gravity heroine and making her model with them for the other girls, and then at the next store they’d pick a new victim. She helped pick presents out for the other boys in their class - she was particularly proud of the gold and blue shoelaces she’d helped Kyoka pick out for Deku - and gushed over the things they bought for themselves. Her own purchases included those running shoes she was in desperate need of and a cute

faux-leather skirt that all of her friends practically forced her to buy after she tried it on during one of Mina and Tooru's fashion shows.

The whole time, the bag from the department store stayed close to her side, and she would occasionally reach in just to run her fingerpads over the smooth silk of Bakugo's shirt. Ochako thought about her earlier comment to Mina, and in the safety of the mall and the companionship of her dearest friends, she let herself indulge. She let herself get lost in the fantasy of a giddy girlfriend buying something nice for her boyfriend, for no other reason than because she could.

Ochako pulled the bag close to her chest and smiled sadly, pretending for a moment that someone precious to her knew her feelings and - for the first time in her life - reciprocated them.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

So this is certainly Twice As Long as the last chapter, isn't it? They're only getting longer after this folks, I've lost control of this ride.

Minor Kirimina, Iidamomo, and Midotsuyu, but again, not enough to tag. They just kinda shoved themselves in there lol. The rest is just straight-up flirting all the way down.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“HEADS UP, BOYS, SANTA CAME EARLY!”

Ochako giggled at Mina's bombastic entrance as they walked back into the dorm common room, weighed down by their multitude of bags. Their trip had been a great success on just about every scale, and Ochako was looking forward to spending the rest of the day doing Literally Nothing At All.

But first, as Mina so eloquently put it, time to be Santa.

A few of their other classmates were already scattered around the common room, and they all looked up at Mina's voice. Sero and Kaminari, the two of Her Boys who were present, both cheered; scrambling over the couch and abandoning their video game to wrap Mina up in a hug. It'd be heartwarming if Kaminari hadn't almost smacked Ochako in the face to get to her.

Only Tsuyu's quick reflexes saved her, and Ochako huddled closer to the smaller girl. To protect *her*, of course. Tsuyu hadn't grown at all taller over the past three years while most everyone else had either shot up or bulked up, and spent half her time avoiding being trampled by human beanpoles.

(Said Uraraka, only a few inches taller herself.)

Hadn't affected her attitude, at all. If anything, Tsuyu had only gotten blunter and less willing to take anyone's bullshit. Ochako wanted to be her when she grew up.

"My hero," Tsuyu joked, patting Ochako's back as the two huddled together.

"Presents!" both boys cheered, bouncing Mina up and down as she laughed. The rest of the present class greeted the girls in a much more subdued manor.

"Let them get all the way inside before you attack them!" Iida instructed, coming closer to chop his hand at Kaminari and Sero a few times before turning to Momo and Tooru and offering to assist them with their bags.

Tooru giggled girlishly, flustered by Iida's chivalrous offer, but Momo just smiled and tucked her hand into his offered arm. "We brought back gifts for everyone," she explained, turning them towards the kitchen area and motioning for the rest of the group to follow. "Is everyone in the dorm? I know no one's working today."

"Bakugo and Kirishima are at the gym and Satou and Shoji made a run to the grocery store for dinner," Iida told her. "I'll text them and ask them to return--"

Momo waved her hand dismissively before patting his arm. "There's no rush! But thank you for offering." She gave him one of her patented heartwarming smiles, and Ochako watched the back of his neck turn red. She and Tsuyu shared a look, silently commiserating for their longtime friend. Momo was distracting enough when you *hadn't* been in love with her for over three years.

Iida was a more patient man than any of them could ever hope to be. Better than them, too; not a thing about his behavior had changed after Momo and Todoroki broke up. There were no subtle attempts to move in on the space beside her that had been recently vacated. He'd treated her like gold since day one and that didn't seem subject to change any time soon. When Momo's heart mended, Ochako could only pray that the two would finally find each other.

Speaking of mended hearts...

"Uraraka! Tsu!" Deku came bounding down the stairs with a wide grin, picking both girls up and spinning them around like a top. Ochako burst out laughing, clinging tightly to his shoulders with one arm so she didn't smack Tsuyu in the face with the bag on the other. "Welcome back! Have fun?"

"*Too* much fun, *at least*," Ochako promised him with a grin, Tsuyu nodding shyly from where she sat on his other arm. "Did you behave while we were gone?" Deku smiled goofily at her, and two years ago, it would have sent her heart racing. Now, there was just a fond

warmth for her closest friend. It had taken a while before interacting with him didn't hurt, but it was time well spent; she wouldn't trade his friendship for anything in the world.

"Yup! Didn't start a fight, didn't grow a new quirk, didn't get attacked. I even made my bed. *Maaay* have liberated a country or two, but only small ones."

She patted his chest twice. "Atta' boy."

Ochako hopped back down to the floor, Deku's free arm now going to support a blushing Tsuyu as he turned his Sunshine Grin on her. "Oh, and Tsu, I finished copying those notes you let me borrow, if you want them back?" She nodded, playing with her fingers.

"It can wait, I'm not in a rush, *kero*," she assured him. Behind Deku's back, Ochako and Kyoka both gave Tsuyu distinctly-unsubtle thumbs up. Tsuyu in return rested a hand on his shoulder and flipped them both off just out of his field of vision. "We brought back presents from the mall for everyone."

How someone could smile with their whole body like Deku did, Ochako didn't know, but he was now; bouncing excitedly with Tsuyu still sitting on his forearms like her own personal beefy-boy-throne. "Presents!?" he exclaimed, and Sero and Kaminari cheered.

"Yes, presents! So put that poor thing down before you throw her into the ceiling in your excitement," Mina ordered with a grin, Deku immediately sputtering in embarrassment as he set Tsuyu gently down on the ground.

Tokoyami and Ojiro had joined the group in the kitchen, watching curiously as all the girls - except Ochako - began placing bags on the kitchen counter. "Shall we do this by last name?" Iida asked, hand on his chin. "Or by classroom order? Perhaps we should-"

"OJI! COME GET Y'ALLS JUICE!" Mina hollered, cutting Iida off and startling the room into laughter. It wasn't long after that the other girls started yelling out names over each other, starting with whoever was in the common area while a pouting Iida sped off at Momo's suggestion to go gather the rest. There were loud cheers and more subdued thanks all layered over each other as the girls passed out the small gifts to their classmates. Nothing too pricey or ornate, and Ochako was grateful that they'd all silently agreed to steer away from gifting anyone else any articles of clothing, but they were still fun little treats.

(Deku actually teared up when Kyoka gave him his new All Might-inspired laces, his smile big and wobbly. Dork.)

Everyone was cooing and whistling as Kouda shyly modeled his new beanie when the front door opened once again and a loud, boisterous voice called out a greeting. Ochako's head snapped around and sure enough, there was Kirishima and Bakugo; back from the gym and freshly showered if the way both of their hair was sitting limp on their heads was any indication. Bakugo was following quietly behind his friend, looking over the gathered students with a quirked eyebrow before his eyes - like they always did when he entered a room - passed over them all until he found her.

Ochako's heart - like it always did when he entered a room - kicked into the next gear and beat recklessly away.

"Ei!" Mina squealed, nearly throwing herself over the kitchen island to launch herself into her boyfriend's arms. Bakugo tried to dodge out of the way, sidestepping the two, but her hand shot out before he could get too far and ruffled his damp hair roughly.

"OI!"

"Hi to you too, Blasty," Mina purred, blowing him a kiss before Kirishima pressed one of his own to her cheek with a laugh. Bakugo just grumbled, stomping towards Ochako as he tried to settle his messy hair back into its normal state of Slightly Less Messy. Ochako laughed to herself with a shake of her head and gestured for him to come closer. When he was within reach, he wordlessly bent down so she could fix his hair, giving him a brief scratch with her short nails right above the neck where he liked it. Bakugo hummed low in his chest, one corner of his mouth pulling up in satisfaction.

"Welcome back, Cheeks," he said, red eyes drifting open and lighting her up the moment they met hers. She smiled at him warmly.

"Hey, Rocketman," Ochako replied with a small laugh. Her hand trailed over his chest as he stood back upright, not bothering to back out of her personal bubble as he watched their assembled classmates with an annoyed frown.

"Do I want to know?" he asked from the side of his mouth, and Ochako giggled, smacking the back of her hand against his stomach without any real force.

"The girls got presents for everyone while we were at the mall," she

explained. With a deep breath to summon her courage, Ochako grinned up at him cheekily and wiggled her own shopping bag for him to see. “And I maaay have gotten something for you.”

Bakugo’s expression seemingly didn’t change as he looked at the bag, but his eyes lit up with curious delight. “You do know my birthday’s in April?” he asked, already reaching for the bag, but Ochako held it back out of his reach with one hand pressed to his chest, pinky up.

“Uh-uh, what do we say?” she prompted, still grinning. Bakugo huffed, mouth twitching as he fought back a grin. He always seemed absurdly delighted whenever Ochako got a little snarky with him- not that she was complaining, of course. His teasing smirk was his ID photo in her phone for a reason.

“Hand it over?”

“Nooo~”

“Now?”

“Come on, I taught you better than this.”

He rolled his eyes, letting out a breath of laughter as he finally grinned at her. “Please, Uraraka?” he said in a voice so low she could feel each word under her palm before she could hear it. It, quite frankly, should be illegal to sound that good. She missed the long-gone days of first year when his voice was still cracking and she could still finish a conversation with him without fear of losing all feeling in her knees.

But she was a master by now at hiding how he affected her, and simply gave him a kittenish smile as she let her arm go slack so he could move closer. “There you go, was that so hard?” she teased.

“Absolutely,” Bakugo said dryly, baring his teeth at her in a toothy grin as he leaned into her personal space good and proper to grab the shopping bag. “One hundred percent. Just... awful. Pretty fuckin’ sure that’s in the Geneva Convention, Cheeks.”

Ochako just laughed. “Bring me an annotated copy and then we’ll talk,” she joked, pushing him back out of her face with one finger on his chin once the bag was in his hand. Instead of opening it, however, he just let it hang at his side, and she pouted. “Not even gonna open it, really?”

Come on, man, put a girl out of her misery!

Bakugo just shrugged. “And get mobbed by all these extras while they fight to see what I got? Fuck that. I’ll open it later.”

Ochako pursed her lips before letting out a small, disappointed sigh. It was probably for the best, anyways. If he thought it was weird, at least she wouldn’t have to watch him react in real time. But a part of her wanted to see his face, wanted to know if she’d done a good job and picked out something he liked. But Bakugo at his core was a private person. She shouldn’t have expected anything else.

“Okay then,” she said, trying to keep the disappointment out of her voice as she gave him a wry smile. “There’s a gift receipt in there just in case it doesn’t... work, I guess?”

Bakugo looked down at her, eyebrows furrowed, but before he could open his mouth Kirishima was rushing over to them with a huge grin. Oh, shit, right; Other People were *A Thing*.

“Brooo, check out what the VP got me!” he cheered, holding up his hands and showing off a pair of reinforced fingerless gloves. “She even matched my costume!”

“That’s so cool, Kiri!” Ochako cheered, holding up her hands for him to punch into without any real force. Bakugo just hummed in reply, his eyes still on Ochako. Shit, she hadn’t hid her disappointment well at all, had she? ‘Please, for once, leave it alone,’ she pleaded mentally. Bakugo had the tact of a wrecking ball and would start swinging the moment he thought she was upset, just to figure out what was wrong.

He would say it’s because when Ochako was in a bad mood, she always took it out on him. Ochako knew it was because she was his friend and deep-down, he was a worrywart.

“What’d you get, man?” Kirishima asked Bakugo, looking down at the bag in his hand curiously. Bakugo groaned, rolling his eyes and giving Ochako a look that said “See? Fucking curious extras all up my ass”. She just returned his look with her own patented “Behave” glare before turning back to a visibly-amused Kirishima with a smile.

“He’s not gonna open it until he is in an Extra-Free Zone, apparently,” she drawled. Kirishima booed at his friend, who simply responded with a raised middle finger.

“Please tell me the others you gave gifts to at least let you see their

reactions,” he said to Ochako, but before she could respond, Mina’s voice cut in.

“Actually, she didn’t get presents for anyone else,” Mina informed the group as she slotted herself under Kirishima’s arm, a coy grin on her lips. “Just Bakugo. She was the one who inspired *us* to get stuff for the rest of the class.”

Ochako pressed her hand to her cheek like she was covering her blush, only to instead use it to shield her mouth from the boy next to her as she mouthed “*I will kill you for sport*” at Mina.

Mina did not appear threatened, and only smiled wider in reply. Butt.

“Really?” Bakugo looked down at her, and- shit, now she really *was* blushing. Ochako reached out and pushed his face away until he was looking away from her, blowing some of her bangs out of her eyes in embarrassment and ignoring his growls of protest.

“Don’t get a big head about it,” she said, distinctly Not Looking At Anyone as she did. Across the common room, Kaminari’s head popped up over the crowd of students.

“I heard ‘*Big*’ and ‘*Head*’, ” he yelled with a grin. “Someone give me context so I can make a properly lewd joke!”

“FUCK OFF , PIKACHU!” Bakugo roared, dodging around Ochako’s hand so Kaminari could experience the full effect of his murderous snarl. Sensing that this was as opportune a moment as any to fuckin’ book it, Ochako took a few steps back and clasped her hands behind her back.

“I should go put the rest of my bags away,” she said, smiling wide to cover the fact that she was feeling more than a little horrifically embarrassed. This hadn’t gone the way she had hoped at all. Bakugo’s head snapped back around to look at her, eyebrows knotted together even more than before.

“Hey, wait-”

“Just tell me later if it works or not!” she told him, backing towards the stairs. “I’ve got some stuff to catch up on in my room anyways, so I’ll see you guys at dinner!” With one last smile and a little peace sign, Ochako turned and headed for the stairs in a very calm and collected manner.

Not running away. Definitely not.

When she finally had her door closed behind her, Ochako let out a long sigh, sinking a little against the wood as she combed her fingers back through her bangs. Why was she even disappointed? This was what she had wanted! Just a casual exchange; no hidden intentions, no secret meanings. Just a friend getting a gift for another.

Right?

“At best?”

“Bakugo realizes what a wonderful girlfriend you would be and admits he’s crazy in love with you.”

Ochako groaned, knocking her head against the door before pushing herself up. Damn Mina for getting her hopes up, and damn *herself* for having hopes at all!

She spent the next hour cleaning her room and trying to keep her mind off of a certain explosive teenager. Tsuyu had texted her not long after Ochako left the common room, followed by an apologetic Mina, and Ochako had reassured them both that she was doing just fine. No one was going to ruin the great day she was having, not even Bakugo! She had moved on to taking care of her small potted garden on her balcony when there was a knock on her door.

Shoot.

“Door’s open!” Ochako called out, not looking up from where she was watering some of her herbs. Her garden was her favorite part of her room; it always made her feel a little closer to home. After all, it was her mom who had passed on her green thumb.

Footsteps approached the balcony and out of the corner of her eyes, she could see a familiar pair of feet. She could *feel him* behind her, probably leaning against the door like a douchebag. Apparently, he wasn’t going to speak first, and Ochako stood with a small sigh. “Are you just gonna stand there like a weirdo or are you gonna say somethi-” she started, turning to face him, but the words quickly dried up in her mouth.

Sure enough, Bakugo was leaning against the doorframe, hands tucked into the pockets of his sweatpants like he didn’t have a care in the world. His hair had dried in the hour or so since she saw him last, an appropriate explosion of blond hair that she knew was much softer

than it had any right to be.

He was wearing a closed-lip smirk and the shirt she had gotten him.

“I dunno, are you?” he fired back, cool and confident as anything.

Bastard.

Ochako took a deep breath through her nose, lips pressed together as she held the air in her lungs for a moment before she let it out as a laugh, shaking her head fondly. When she looked back at him, she was smiling. “Proud of yourself?” she asked, leaning back against her balcony and bracing herself with her free hand.

“Incredibly,” Bakugo said with a nod. “That was smooth as hell.”

“You do know you’re supposed to wear that with *real pants*, right?”

“Cheeks I swear to fuckin’ god -”

Ochako laughed again, setting her “watering can” - yes, Bakugo, it *was* just a water bottle with holes poked in the top, shut *up* - down so she could step closer. She motioned for him to stand up straight and stopped about halfway to him so she could look him over.

Mina was right. They *were* his colors.

The grey was dark enough to nearly pass for black and set off his tanned skin beautifully. The gold thread shone and refracted the light with each breath he took, and the peeks of maroon from where the top two buttons were left undone made the color of his eyes even richer.

He looked even better than she had pictured at the mall, and not for the first time, Ochako realized that she really had a bad habit of sabotaging herself.

“So I take it that it fits?” she asked, taking those last two steps so she could fiddle with the collar and smooth the silk fabric over his broad shoulders.

“Yeah. How you knew my size is a question I really don’t think I want to know the answer to,” Bakugo said gruffly. She snorted.

“A lady never reveals her secrets,” she teased with a wink. He’d left the sleeves down, and without thinking about it overly-much, Ochako reached down and began to roll them up to his elbows.

“Having fun?”

“Hush, I just wanna see how it looks!”

Bakugo chuckled, his lip pulling up just a little more into that crooked smile she loved so much. “You didn’t get a chance to play with dolls much as a kid, did you?” he teased, and she looked at him through her lashes with a pout.

“One, rude. Two, I bought it, I get to style it,” she said primly, patting his now-bare forearm before gesturing for his other arm. He put his wrist into her hands without complaint and she rolled the other sleeve up to match. She stepped back once again to look him over, except this time her hand stayed on his arm. His skin was warm under her fingerpads, and she felt that warmth move through her until it filled her up to the brim.

Hoping that she wasn’t blushing too horribly, Ochako looked up at Bakugo with a bright smile. “It looks good!” she complimented. “Do... do you like it?”

Bakugo was giving her *that look* again; the one that made her heart skip several long beats and take off into the sky like a bottle rocket. It didn’t help that the sun was behind her, highlighting the golden flecks in his eyes that made her want to melt into his arms. Shiiit, why did he have to be so darn pretty!? This couldn’t possibly be good for her cardiovascular health.

“It works,” he said with a shrug, and in Bakuspeak that was practically gushing. Ochako’s smile grew even wider, her shoulders wiggling in excitement.

“Good! I know you said you were running out of nice shirts that fit, so I figured you could find *somewhere* to wear it,” she babbled, mindlessly holding on to his wrist with both hands. “We’re gonna start networking soon and lord knows after graduation we’re going to-”

“Uraraka, breathe,” Bakugo said, putting his hand over her mouth and flooding her senses with the smell of burnt caramel. She took a deep breath before she could stop herself, immediately pouting at him and angling her eyebrows as much as possible to cover it up. He was making her dizzy. “You don’t need to explain the gift.”

“I mean,” she started, muffled, “I know, but-”

“Shush.”

“Baku-”

“Shuuush.”

“But I-”

“Killin’ the goddamn moment, Cheeks, come on now.”

“Oh, we’re having a moment, now?” One eyebrow raised high over his palm, and he snorted at her.

“Were , until you started *talkin’*. ”

Ochako pulled down his hand so his hand was cupping the bottom of her chin instead, head tilted up and tongue sticking out playfully.

“You like it when I talk,” she joked.

“Very rarely,” he rebutted, pulling his hand back so he could gently knock his knuckles against her forehead. She shook her head in reply, blinking owlishly while he chuckled. “Finish up with your plants, dinner’s almost ready.”

Ochako lit up. “Did you cook?” she asked excitedly.

“No.”

Damnit!

Bakugo threw his head back and laughed when Ochako visibly wilted at his answer. “Hurry up, I’ll meet you downstairs,” he said as he turned back around to walk through her room. It wasn’t his first time in her space, not by a long shot, but it still made her feel soft and warm seeing how easily he navigated around her room.

“Why don’t you just walk down with me?” she asked.

“Gotta change.” He tugged at his sleeve to illustrate his point. Ochako followed him in, making a note to finish watering her plants later as she closed the sliding glass door.

“Why?”

“Burnt frozen pizza with a bunch of morons we go to school with isn’t exactly a special fuckin’ occasion, Cheeks.” Bakugo spun on his heel midstep, gracefully walking backwards as he gestured to the shirt she had given him. “I’m savin’ this for something good.”

Ochako beamed at him, giggling happily as her heart filled up with warmth. "Okay, fine. Promise I'll see it again?"

"I promise."

"... With *real pants* next time-?"

"*Uraraka.*"

Chapter End Notes

Look I know I wrote it but Ochako calling Bakugo 'Rocketman' is fucking inspired. I'm sure I'm not the first to do it but I'm Soff, Y'all.

Next time, we get Bakugo's POV!

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

It's Kat's turn~

This chapter's alternate title is "Katsuki Gets My Mommy Issues Until I Figure Out How I Feel About Mitsuki, and We All Stan Masaru In The Meantime" lmao

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Katsuki had never really cared about fashion.

His parents had tried; bless their hearts they had fuckin' tried. His mom still had a few pictures from photoshoots they did together before he was old enough to protest hanging in her office. But he'd never taken to it like they had. Had never been drawn to the fashion world like he had been to the world of heroes. He knew how to dress himself -what looked good and what didn't-, and that was all he really needed.

Until *fucking Ochako* went and got him that shirt and smiled at the sight of him wearing it and now the thing was constantly on his goddamn mind. No wonder his parents adored her; she'd accomplished in a few minutes what they'd been trying to do for literally his entire life.

It was *actually* infuriating how easily he bent to her.

Katsuki sighed, dropping his phone into his lap and letting his head fall back to knock against the window of the train. It was fairly empty for a Saturday, but far be it for him to complain about it. The fewer people to witness whatever fucking face journey he'd just gone on, the better.

It was one of his rare days off from both school and his work study, and he could think of about a billion other places he'd rather fucking be. The gym. His room. Kicking any of his classmates' asses on the game system they had downstairs...

In Ochako's room. Lounging on her bed buried in her obscenely large collection of homemade pillows, watching her bounce around the room while she studied or cleaned. Sitting out on her balcony and talking about nothing while she tended her potted garden. Drifting in

the air under the influence of her Quirk for "conditioning", bouncing into each other and clinging tightly together as Ochako laughed and Katsuki tried not to think too hard about how much he wanted the rest of his life to be exactly like this...

Fucking *yikes*. His crush was showing. Somewhere, impossibly, Ashido knew he was being a sap and was punching the air.

All of this to say that Katsuki was doing none of this, and it was all his mom's fault. The hag wasn't even in the same *country* and she still found a way to be a fucking bother. With his mom out of the country on some sort of summit for her modeling agency and him at the dorms, there was no one ensuring his dad was taking care of himself like an Actual Human Being. Katsuki didn't lick his superhuman drive and perfectionism off the goddamn ground, after all, and without someone to drag him from his work, Masaru would sleep on his office couch for a week and find not a damn thing wrong with that.

Ridiculous. Katsuki wasn't supposed to be parenting *his* parents until he was at least thirty.

He'd had about a dozen texts from his mother insisting he go have lunch with his dad on his day off when he woke up. After an hour and three separate phone calls that resulted in Kirishima throwing -what sounded like- his boot at the wall and yelling at him to shut up, Katsuki had forced himself out of the dorm and, well, here he was.

On the train.

At eleven AM.

On his day off.

He would rather be laying on the tracks, to be fully honest.

His phone pinged in his lap and Katsuki groaned aloud as he picked it up and turned the screen up. The odds of it being his fucking mom demanding proof he was on his way were annoyingly high. But when he unlocked the screen, it was an entirely different person texting him, and Katsuki hated himself a little for how quickly his bored snarl turned into a smile.

Cheeks

((11.04 AM)) tell your dad i said hi!!!! hope you guys have a good time!

Shit. It defied explanation how one message from her could turn his entire mood around. Just imagining her curled up in her bed, bedhead an absolute mess of tangles and curls, thinking about *him*? Fuck, that could fill anyone's chest cavity with an insane amount of fuckin' butterflies and rainbows and *mush*.

He was a wreck.

He kind of loved it.

Katsuki was still smiling as he stepped off the train, shooting her a quick message back as soon as enough time had passed that he didn't look stupidly desperate. He still felt warm and fuzzy all over as he made his way through downtown Musutafu, stopping to pick up udon and drinks from his dad's favorite noodle shop. He still walked a little taller as he made his way into the lobby of the office building where his dad worked, acknowledging the receptionist with a nod before using his guest access card to head up to the right floor.

His phone buzzed in his pocket and he grinned like a maniac. He needed to get his fucking act together before his dad caught him acting like a lovestruck moron, but could anyone fucking blame him? The most badass, beautiful, funny girl in the world was thinking about *him*. Katsuki would be riding this high until the fucking sun burned out.

His dad had been in the same fashion house in the same office since Katsuki was four, so he could have made his way to his dad's office blindfolded and concussed (he had, on one occasion; retirement parties in the fashion world were *Wild*). He nodded towards the familiar faces that greeted him, even stopped and let his dad's business partner coo and fuss over him like a touchy aunt. After turning down her millionth request to model for whatever collection she was working on now, Katsuki broke away and finally ducked into his dad's office.

Bakugou Masaru's office reflected the man who worked in it; warm and full of light and proof of his love for his family. Sunlight poured in from the wall of windows, dancing across the colorful dresses hung on racks and the art hung on the wall. Nearest to his drawing tablet, Katsuki could spot the familiar photo of eight-year-old him beaming at the camera from where he was sandwiched between his parents, mountains behind them as sunset painted the sky. There were more recent photos of both him and his mother on a pinboard above that, taken from social media or the news, and Katsuki's heart gave a

traitorous little squeeze when his eyes immediately jumped to the photo of him and Ochako posing together with their gold medals after winning their third Sports Festival together.

Masaru himself was so distracted by work that he didn't even take note of Katsuki's arrival. Part of him was tempted to see how long it would take for his dad to notice him, but knowing his dad, Katsuki would be waiting for a *while* and their lunch was already getting cold. Instead, he set his bags down on the small table crowded with sketches and fabric samples and came up beside his dad with loud footsteps, giving him plenty of warning before knocking on his desk.

"Hey, old man."

A small '*pop*' went off anyways as Masaru jumped in his seat with a yelp, turning to look at Katsuki with wide eyes behind crooked glasses. Katsuki couldn't help his snort of laughter as he gestured to his own face. But Masaru was already out of his seat, glasses notably unfixed and tablet pen smoldering a little as he rushed around to greet his son with a warm, tight hug.

"Kat!"

How he could fit that much love and excitement into one word, Katsuki didn't know, but it made him melt into his father's embrace like it always did, even now that he was a few inches taller and several pounds heavier than the man. He loved both of his parents - really, he did- but being with his dad was just... easier. Half of the time his mom stressed him out to the point where he had to shove his hands under his own arms just to repress the sparking of his Quirk, but his dad was the opposite. Masaru's explosive quirk had made him calm and steady in a way that Katsuki wished he could achieve.

He was getting closer to it, especially in the past few years.

"You didn't tell me you were coming," Masaru said fondly, pulling back and *finally* fixing his glasses so he could get a good look at his son.

Katsuki shook his head. "You clearly haven't checked your phone in the past three hours then."

Masaru's expression shifted to something familiar and sheepish as he patted Katsuki's shoulder. "Er, I mean-"

"Get your phone while I set up lunch," Katsuki said with a roll of his

eyes, nudging his dad towards his desk. “Honestly, Dad, it’s like the building could collapse and you’d still be sketching.”

“I would notice!” Masaru said with a laugh. His dad’s laughter petered off as he finally looked at his phone, Katsuki’s own grin growing steadily in the following silence. “Oh. I see your messages now.”

“Uh-huh. And how many missed calls from Mom?”

“I uh... I’m going to call her.”

Katsuki barked out a laugh as his dad stepped towards the windows with his phone to his ear, nervously scratching his neck as he waited for his wife to pick up. The sounds of his mother’s tinny voice yelling over the phone while Katsuki moved samples and sketches to clear a space for their food was almost soothing at this point in his life; like a family interaction wasn’t complete without someone shouting their head off. Katsuki slipped out his own phone and grabbed a quick snapshot of his dad attempting to apologize to and soothe his wife over the phone, sending the picture with the caption *“guess who just called the old hag back after missing her calls all morning”* to Ochako.

“Yes, yes he’s here,” his dad said into the phone, dragging Katsuki away from his own. “He looks fine, darling. Brought lunch and everything. He-” his dad turned to him, “What are we having?”

“Udon from that shop on the corner.”

“Oh, I love that place!”

“No shit, that’s why I got it. Tell Mom you’ll call her back after you eat; food’s gettin’ cold!” He could hear Mitsuki yelling for a moment before his dad got all mushy and started in on the *“I love you”*s and *“I miss you”*s. Katsuki just watched for a moment, taking note of how his dad smiled out the window as his mom presumably said something sappy right back. His entire body was relaxed, years shaved off of him until he looked probably just as boyish and stupid in love as he had when he had first gotten together with Katsuki’s mom.

People always told Katsuki he looked like his mom, but in that moment, he couldn’t help but think he’d never seen himself in his father so clearly.

Masaru turned faster than Katsuki was expecting and he quickly wiped whatever fucking emotion *that* had just been off his face, focusing instead on getting lunch set up. He didn’t have to worry about who

was getting what; they always ordered the same thing from that shop. His dad was responsible for his love of hot food, after all.

“Thanks again for lunch, son,” Masaru said as he joined him at the table, giving his shoulder a quick squeeze and pressing a kiss to the side of his head before Katsuki could duck away.

“Yeah, yeah- someone’s gotta make sure you don’t starve to death in here,” Katsuki grumbled, still a little flustered from his epiphany. Shit, now was not the time for this; his dad could read him like a fucking book, and he did *not* want to have the Ochako Conversation again. Last time they had been on the ground floor of his childhood home. This time they were on the thirty-eighth floor and there would be nothing keeping him from flinging himself off the building except for some weak-ass glass.

They both tucked into their food without much further fanfare, his dad making easy conversation about his latest work while Katsuki just sat and listened. It was nice, his father’s voice low and soothing in a way that could -even now when he was nineteen- put Katsuki to sleep if he wasn’t careful. Masaru didn’t pry into his life like his mom did, usually with the grace of a fucking crowbar. Instead, he just accepted whatever Katsuki offered with bright, interested eyes and offered his own insight instead of digging for more.

“The Hero Gala is coming up soon, isn’t it?” Masaru asked between bites, and Katsuki gave his dad a wry grin.

“If this is you trying to lead into a conversation about what I’m wearing-”

“Not at all!” His dad’s expression was too innocent as he took a sip of his soda, and Katsuki snorted a laugh. “Just saying. If you need a suit...”

“You know I’d come to you, dad, but aren’t you already doing outfits for some pros?”

“You act as if that’d be enough to make me miss the chance to help my son get all fancy for a big event. Your mother would kill us both.” They both laughed at that, Katsuki feeling more relaxed than he had in a while.

“I’ve got something in mind,” Katsuki promised. Ochako’s gift was his first thought, but then the memory of her soft, cool hands on his arms, smoothing the fabric over his shoulders, hit him like a brick, and he

tried to subtly cover his face as best as he could from his dad.

He had spent nearly an hour in his room after Ochako had given it to him and fled, staring at himself in the mirror and trying to think of how to show his appreciation without saying something fucking stupid again, as he was prone to do. Gifts from Ochako always made him dumb. Fuck, *Ochako* made him dumb. The second he had put the thing on, he'd wanted to run to her and get her approval, wanted to show off for her and see her eyes light up and her cheeks get all pretty and rosy. When she had stepped into his space, still laughing at his stupid entrance and backlit by the setting sun, fiddling with his sleeves and tracing her cool fingers over his skin and sending shivers through his entire body, he had wanted nothing more than to just wrap her up in his arms and *hold her*.

He just wanted *her*. He almost couldn't remember what it was like not to.

As if summoned by his thoughts, his phone pinged in his pocket and Katsuki scrambled for his phone in a Pavlovian response that made him hate himself a little more. Sure enough, Ochako had responded to his snapshot with a picture of herself caught mid-laugh, obviously perched out on her balcony, and his heart *melted*.

There was a cough from his right, and Katsuki froze completely solid. Son of a fuck.

Masaru was smiling against the lip of his soda can, eyes lit up with a look that made Katsuki want to fucking *bolt*. "So how's Uraraka?" he asked casually, and Katsuki dropped his phone back to his lap with a deep glare.

"Stop it."

"Just a question, son. Haven't seen her in a while."

Katsuki could feel embarrassment and anger tensing up his shoulders, and fought to keep the feeling down. "She's fine," he gritted out. His parents loved Ochako almost as much as they loved teasing their son *about* Ochako. At this point, Katsuki was just thankful his dad kept the teasing to when Ochako wasn't in the fucking room, *Mom*.

Masaru could obviously sense the tension in his son, and backed off respectfully. But the damage was done; she was back on his mind, and Katsuki just wanted to hide in the hood of his jacket and scream. Of all the people to talk to about his... ugh, *feelings*, his dad was probably

his best option. Kirishima came to mind, but he couldn't keep a secret to save his life, and the moron was already less-than-subtle about his attempts to get Katsuki to make a move on his partner. Ashido just fuckin' teased him and grinned whenever he and Ochako were together -*which was basically all the time*- and on God, if Kaminari or Sero fuckin' tried to pull that "*Can You Feel The Love Tonight*" stunt again, Katsuki was going to need bail money.

Somehow, *her* friends were worse.

Deku had pulled out a powerpoint presentation the moment Katsuki and Ochako had started seriously considering the potential of their combined Quirks, and Katsuki didn't doubt he had a longer one prepared for the day they even hinted at a deeper romantic relationship. IcyHot was a *shithead* about it without even saying anything. The frog chick just *stared* at him any time he stood next to Ochako, like she was staring straight through him and deciding if she found him lacking or not, and Glasses had attempted to give him the shovel talk at least three times.

It was enough to make anyone scream, but he would have fuckin' suffered if their interference meant that Ochako was at all interested in him romantically. But he couldn't fucking *tell*, and that was the whole goddamn problem.

"Yen for your thoughts?" Masaru asked softly, watching Katsuki closely, and he just sighed.

"... You can't talk to Mom about this," Katsuki started quietly, and Masaru sat up straighter.

"My lips are sealed."

"If... I..." Katsuki growled in frustration, pulling at his hair with one hand while the other tapped against the table. "When a girl... Fuck!" he hollered before dropping his head to the table. His dad's broad hand rubbed along his shoulders soothingly.

"Take your time."

Katsuki just breathed into his arms, struggling with his words in a way that only that damn mochi-cheeked bane of his existence could cause. After a minute or two, he finally looked up at his dad.

"How can you tell when a girl is being nice to you because she likes you, as opposed to when she's being nice to you just because she's

nice?” he asked.

Because at the end of the day, that was the whole damn problem. Ochako was just *nice*. Charming and full of love and not shy about who got it. For every time she complimented him, she gave the same encouragement to some other extra. Her hugs made his fucking stomach flip inside out and upside down, but she’d turn around and throw herself at one of her friends with the same amount of enthusiasm. He couldn’t be mad about it, it was who she was. It was part of why he liked her. It just meant that he had no idea where he stood.

When it came to their work as heroes, in the field and in the classroom, their teamwork was unlike anything else; *special*. Just for the two of them. He knew his place in her life when she placed it in his hands and trusted him to keep her safe.

But her love was for everyone, and Katsuki couldn’t find stable-enough footing to make good on the emotions he was drowning in and ask to claim some of her heart as his.

Masaru hummed in thought, and Katsuki appreciated that he was taking it seriously. “Well, I would think that there are certain things she’d do that she doesn’t with anyone else,” he started slowly. “Ways she shows her affection exclusive to you.”

“Like what?”

“You know her better than me, Kat,” his dad said apologetically.

“... She got me a gift,” Katsuki admitted, Mina’s words playing in his mind.

“Actually, she didn’t get presents for anyone else, just Bakugou. She was the one who inspired us to get stuff for the rest of the class.”

“And she doesn’t do that for her friends?”

Not exactly. Ochako liked giving her friends things, little gifts to show her appreciation, but nothing like the shirt she had given him. Nice. Perfectly in line with his tastes. *Exactly* his size. Something she wanted to see him in- that she had *liked* seeing him in, if the way she had looked him over was any indication (and fuck if the memory of *that* look darkening her brown eyes didn’t make Katsuki want to hide his face again).

“This was... more. I think,” he admitted. “But I could be reading it wrong. Seeing what I want to see.”

Masaru hummed. “Possibly. But you’re very smart and very observant, I think you should have a little more faith in yourself. Besides, you know Uraraka very well. You trust her.”

“I don’t need you to talk me through figuring out *my* feelings, dad,” Katsuki grumbled. “Already come to terms with that shit. It’s the other half I can’t fucking figure out.”

“And what conclusion did you come to?” Katsuki glared silently up at his dad, but Masaru just smiled patiently back. “Have you said it out loud yet?”

“... No.”

“Might help.”

“... I love her,” Katsuki whispered, hiding his face back in his arms as the overwhelming truth of it all washed over him. Fuck, he was in love with Ochako. Stupid in love. His dad was right; saying it out loud was way different than admitting it to himself in the quiet solitude of his room. When had it even happened? He’d accepted it ages ago, too busy fighting the rest of the world to fight with himself, but did he even know *when* he’d fallen?

Was it the day they’d been paired together and she had looked at him amongst the wreckage they’d caused half on accident and just *laughed*? Was it the first time she had turned off all the lights and closed the curtains in her room before turning on her little star lamp and reaching out to cancel his gravity, welcoming him into her own little galaxy and holding on tight to his arm as they spun around the room? Was it when she had first clung to his back and untethered him from the rest of the world with a touch, whispering “*Light it up, Rocketman*” in his ear and whooping in delight as they streaked across the sky like a fucking comet? Was it those fights during the beginning of their partnership, when he’d push and push just to see her push back, just to watch her slowly realize she could? To see her find the strength and will he *knew* she possessed, to watch her carry herself a little taller?

Fuck, it might have even been when she rained hell down on him during that first Sports Festival; not holding back even for a moment unlike their other classmates and finally fucking meeting him on his level.

“I’m in love with her,” he said again, looking up at his dad feeling a little lost. Masaru was smiling broadly, reaching up to squeeze the back of Katsuki’s neck in a way that instantly grounded him.

“Feel better?” Masaru asked gently. Katsuki let out a laugh that might have been a hint hysterical.

“Actually feel fucking terrified, but yeah. Doesn’t feel as big anymore.”

Masaru just nodded, reaching over to give Katsuki a tight side hug that was only a little awkward with both of them sitting. “It can be scary,” he reassured. “But if anyone can face that fear down, it’s you, Kat. My brave boy.”

“... When was your last ‘*Don’t stroke his ego anymore*’ talk with Mom?”

“Three weeks ago. Don’t take this moment away from me.”

Katsuki dropped his head against his dad’s arm and laughed, squeezing his arm back before sitting upright. “Thanks, dad,” he said earnestly, which made his father beam like a fuckin’ dork. “Oi, stop that. I can retract my thanks.”

“It’s already enshrined in my memory,” Masaru sighed happily, laughing when Katsuki reached over to punch him in the shoulder without any real power. His dad let him have a few moments to process the emotional whirlpool he’d just been mercilessly dragged into and spat back out of.

Both men finished their noodles before Masaru broached the topic again.

“What are you going to do now?” he asked like he was asking about his plans for dinner and not how his son planned to woo Uraraka Fucking Ochako.

“Not a fucking clue,” Katsuki admitted. He still didn’t want to take that step without knowing Ochako’s feelings; it wasn’t just his heart on the line after all. They were partners now; an unstoppable force against villainy, and they were about a month out from graduating (literally) to the big leagues. He still was chasing that top spot - although fucking Deku had basically already broken the goddamn scale with his gifted Quirks- but now he couldn’t imagine being at the top without Ochako next to him.

Ochako made him a better person, but Uravity made him a better hero. He didn't want to risk any of that.

"Might I make a suggestion?" Masaru offered, and Katsuki hummed. "Escort her to the Hero's Gala. You two are partnered up so it makes sense to go together, and you could test the waters in a different setting. Treat it like a date and see how she reacts."

... Shit, that was a good idea.

Ochako had been gushing about the Hero's Gala for weeks now. Third years got to go as a chance to debut on the pro-hero scene before graduation a couple of weeks later, and his class's excitement had become a beast of its own since Aizawa had announced it. Katsuki had been more excited about the opportunity to finally be acknowledged as an equal by the pros he'd been working for and learning from for years now than about the party. Miruko, his and Ochako's current employer, had even hinted that she would be willing to introduce him to a few bigger names he hadn't had a chance to meet yet.

(Not Endeavor. Katsuki already knew the douchebag, and he was *still* pissed about the way he had snubbed Ochako when she'd applied to do her work-study there with him following their teaming up. Endeavor had turned her down and Katsuki had resigned an hour later with a letter that had made Deku cringe and IcyHot *actually laugh*. It had been a little terrifying, really.)

But now? Imagining walking into a fancy ballroom, Ochako on his arm for everyone to see and looking like a fucking dream... Katsuki hadn't realized how much he wanted it until it was dangled in front of him.

"Where'd you pull that idea from?" Katsuki asked, a little bewildered.
"You never had to do this with Mom."

Masaru grinned in a way that was a little crooked and a little mischievous, and again, Katsuki was struck with the thought that people who said he didn't look like his dad were stupid or blind or both. "You're right in that. Your mother is very direct."

"*Direct-* Dad, she's as subtle as a bullet train. On a boat."

"*But!* I have spent most of my professional career working with and befriending women. I know a thing or two," Masaru said with a shrug. "Also, this is verbatim the conversation I had last week with my partner about *her* crush, and she is, as the kids say, a useless lesbian so

hints don't work on her."

Katsuki let out a laugh that nearly knocked him out of his chair, not even registering that his dad had just indirectly called him out until his breathing had evened back out. "Oi!"

Masaru took an innocent sip of his soda.

"Jackass," Katsuki grumbled. "Fine. I'll take her to the Gala." His dad positively lit up, and Katsuki had to bite down his own smile in response.

"Wonderful! Does this mean that I can lead the conversation towards what you're wearing *now?*"

"Ugh, Dad!"

"Women love a man in a well-tailored suit, it's a universal fact! Besides, I'm sure Uraraka will be dressing up as well."

Katsuki hummed. "Maybe. Last I heard, she hadn't found a... dress... yet..." Katsuki trailed off as his eyes ran along the literal rack of evening gowns behind his dad. Ochako had been freaking out recently about trying to dress up that one black dress she'd had for years and barely fit into anymore while the other girls in their class were trying to get her to splurge on a nicer dress for the event. But if it was for herself, Ochako didn't like to indulge.

She had given him the shirt he was planning to the Gala. It would only be right to return the favor, right? Hell, he'd even be spending less than she likely had.

Katsuki looked at his dad and could tell by his excited grin that he had caught on to his train of thought.

"Can we-"

"Please yes . I've been dying to dress Uraraka up from the moment you brought her home," Masaru said quickly, bolting up from his seat and barely remembering to grab his phone before heading to the door.

Katsuki followed with a grin, laughing to himself when he realized that once again, Ochako had somehow gotten him interested in fashion.

Chapter End Notes

We're at the halfway point now! Huge shout-out to Amiicee, Jaryn, and Ichigo for letting me babble at them about this fic for hours on end, and a big thank you to Nicki aka bigbadw0lf for beta-ing this chapter. Yall are the best and your support means the world to me <3

To everyone who supports this fic with their comments and kudos, thank you as well! I haven't been in a large active fandom in a very long time and literally do not know how to even handle all the love and encouragement you all have given me. It is absolutely the best problem to have lol. I'm going to try to reply to all my comments from now on, so please have patience with me while I remember how Interacting With Readers Works lol.

This chapter took a very different direction than I was expecting, Masaru kinda took over lol. There was supposed to be more about actually picking the dress out, and Mitsuki was going to have more of a presence, but I really adore the father-son bonding so I'm happy with the final product. So next time we're gonna see the dress and see some real-time Kacchako interactions from Kat's perspective~

By the way, him already calling her Ochako in his internal monologue? Very intentional.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

My Brand of Kacchako is officially 'Soft Katsuki is so in love w Ochako he literally doesn't know how to handle it, just that he *wants it*'. This is my dissertation. Also Wingmen Izuku and Eijirou are all that matters and that is a FACT(tm).

SPOILER WARNING! There is a 'blink and you miss it' spoiler for the BNHA manga chapter 285 in here that I just couldn't resist putting in. It's subtle enough that if you don't know what you're looking for it won't stick out, but it's definitely there so I wanted to put a warning.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Welcome home, Bakubr- *oh my god presents!*”

Katsuki knew he should have fucking come in through the back door.

Eijirou ran over, abandoning his protein shake in the kitchen to bounce with puppy-like excitement around Katsuki as he made his way to the elevator. “You went to see Mom and Dad without me?” he joked, reaching out to tug at the familiar garment bag slung over Katsuki’s shoulder, only to have his hand swatted away.

“Stop fucking calling them that! And just the old man,” Katsuki growled. Thank god there were only a few other people in the common area, and all too busy with their own fucking lives to worry about the scene Eijirou was making.

He’d wanted to be discreet about this; lord knows no one could make a fuss about the smallest things quite like his classmates, but it seemed his prayers were only half answered.

At least Mina wasn’t downstairs. He would have had to fight her off the moment she saw the designer label on the bag.

“Again- without me?”

“You were the one who basically kicked me out this morning, jackass!”

“Just admit they like me more,” Eijirou said with a laugh, wagging

his eyebrows in a way that made him look like an idiot, and Katsuki would be less annoyed if he wasn't fairly certain it was true.

Oh well. At least his dad liked him.

Katsuki just groaned. "Can we do this like, any other time?" he asked. "I've got something important to take care of." The garment bag slung over his shoulder seemed to weigh a million pounds, and he knew if he stopped too long, he was going to overthink everything and all his carefully gathered courage was going to dissolve into ash.

It was fine. She was going to like it.

If she didn't, he'd just fling himself into the goddamn sun.

... He was fine.

"More important than showing your best friend your new threads?"

"*Infinitely* so."

"The words you say *hurt* sometimes," Eijirou said, pouting, and Katsuki stopped to give him a startled look.

"*Sometimes!?*"

So busy processing *that* particular insult to his roasting skills -of which he was probably a little too proud- Katsuki completely missed the newest roadblock joining the conversation until he felt the tug on the garment bag.

"You went to see your dad, Kacchan?" Deku asked, already pulling on the zipper, and Katsuki ripped himself away to safety with a snarl. Why was he surrounded by the nosiest people on the goddamn planet!?

"Don't just grab my shit, you stupid nerd!" he growled, but neither him nor Eijirou even so much as flinched. Fuckin'- Katsuki really did miss the days when people were still scared of him sometimes. His improved relationships -if they could be called that- with his classmates helped with the whole "*Everyone Being Convinced He Was One Bad Day Away From Going Rogue and Killing Everyone*" thing, but damn he'd missed the peace and quiet.

Somewhere in the back of his mind, a voice that sounded suspiciously like Ochako laughed at him.

(Even when she *wasn't around*, really!? He needed a new fucking brain.)

“Bet it’s his suit for the Gala,” Eijirou said. He sunk into a playful crouch and Katsuki immediately took a step back. He was confident in his abilities, but he also wasn’t a fucking moron, and in an enclosed space, there was no way he could outrun them both. Deku was already grinning, rolling out his shoulders, and Katsuki wished he could blow someone up just by staring at them hard enough.

“Don’t you fucking *dare*-”

“*RUSH ‘EM!*”

“*SON OF A BITCH!*”

Katsuki barely dodged out of the way of Kirishima’s grasping arms, and almost saw his life flash before his eyes when he immediately bent back nearly in half to avoid Deku’s attempt to fucking tackle him to the floor. The garment bag swung wildly in his hand, the soft, muted sound of chains rattling suddenly making his stomach drop. Shit, if they grabbed the bag too roughly-

“I got it!”

“*STOP!*” Katsuki roared, swinging for Kirishima defensively. “*It’s not for me!*” he hollered and that was enough to stop the two devils’ mid-attack, thank god. He quickly looked over the bag, sighing in relief when he saw there was no obvious damage.

“Wait, it’s not?” Deku asked curiously, still prepared to pounce, and Katsuki held the bag closer protectively. Fuck, he wanted to be anywhere but here.

“So it *is* a present!” Eijirou cried triumphantly.

“Keep it fucking down,” Katsuki hissed, looking around the common room. The only person paying attention to the dog and pony show Eijirou and Deku were putting on was a mildly-perturbed Shoji. A brief snarl was enough to get him to raise two of his hands defensively and turn back to his homework or whatever, and Katsuki was able to focus back on the two morons in front of him. Eijirou looked like he was about to vibrate out of his skin and they were both smiling like jackasses.

“If I let you see, will you let me fucking leave!?” Katsuki hissed,

feeling tense and nervous all over again. They both nodded enthusiastically, and Katsuki carefully pulled down the zipper just enough that they could see part of the dress inside. Hopefully enough to appease them so he could leave and go lick his wounds in private and try to gather his nerve again.

Whatever reaction he had expected, it wasn't the stunned silence that followed his reveal. Eijirou's jaw was practically scraping the floor, and Deku-oh for god's sake.

"Are you *really* crying right now?" Katsuki groaned, and Deku only sniffed.

"*Midoriya-*" Eijirou started, reaching out blindly to excitedly smack Deku's arm. Deku nodded.

"It's finally happening!" he whimpered wetly. Katsuki, carefully rezipping the bag once he was sure nothing had been damaged, looked back towards them cautiously.

"What on earth are you talking abou- *hey!*" The two boys grabbed an arm each and *pulled*, frog-marching a snarling Katsuki into the stairwell. He might as well be struggling against two fucking walls for all the good it was doing him; neither of them were even using their Quirks, how were they both this strong!?

They happily ignored him, babbling at each other as they dragged him upstairs. He was blocking them out mostly out of spite, but then one of them said '*Uraraka*' and his dumb feral primate brain perked up long enough to also catch the word '*date*' and fucking hell, now he was blushing. Curse his traitorous blood vessels!

"Let me fucking *go!*" he howled, kicking furiously and nearly taking out Sato as he passed by their little kidnapping-attempt-in-progress on his way down the stairs. "I'll fucking kill you both, see that I don't!"

They both ignored him. Shouldn't surprise him; they'd both been ignoring his death threats for years now. If Katsuki were a lesser man, he'd follow through just to prove a point.

They didn't stop until they had reached the fourth floor, standing in the stairwell between the doors that led to the boys' and girls' sides respectively. When they finally set his feet on the ground, Katsuki was ready to bolt for his room, but fucking Deku caught him by the shoulders instead. Eijirou was next to him and started... straightening his jacket?

“What the-” Katsuki started, only to cut himself off when Deku started fucking with his hair. “Get your fucking hands off of me!”

“Don’t mess with it too much, you know Uraraka likes it messy!” Eijirou chirped and Katsuki’s head whipped around.

“Cheeks!? How the fuck do you-”

“Well, you see, I have these things called *eyes*, man,” Eijirou said with a laugh and good-natured elbow to the spleen, completely forgetting his own strength. Katsuki wheezed a little. He knew it was a school for heroes, but goddamn, what were they putting in the fucking food!?

He tried to turn to jab his laughing friend in revenge, but before he could even shift his weight, there were hands on his face and he was being yanked around to meet Deku’s determined stare. He had to look down, and it soothed his aching ego a little that he still had a few inches on his rival.

“Kacchan, you’ve got this,” Deku said firmly. His expression was better suited for facing down villains instead of... whatever was happening in the stairwell, and Katsuki couldn’t even figure out how he was supposed to react.

“Wuh?”

“You’re gonna go in there, ask Uraraka out, and you’re going to *nail it!* You know why?”

“I’m honestly still trying to figure out what the fuck is going on-” Katsuki began, but Deku cut him off with an enthusiastic fist pump that came way too close to his face.

“Because you’re number one!” Deku cheered and Eijirou joined in with his own excited bouncing and hooting.

... Had there been drugs in Katsuki’s noodles? Was he on acid? Was that what this was? What the fuck was happening right now?

“Come on, Kacchan, what are you?” Deku said, giving his face a gentle shake.

“Fucking baffled , for starters-”

“No! You’re number one!”

Well. That soothed his ego a little more. His lips ticked up in a small

smirk despite himself, and Deku's smile grew.

"What are you?" Deku repeated.

"I'm... number one?" Katsuki said slowly.

"What are you!?" Eijirou encouraged.

"I'm number one!"

" *What are you!?* " Deku yelled.

"*I'm number one!* " Katsuki yelled back, heart racing like he was about to jump into battle.

"Hell yeah you are!" Deku and Eijirou cheered. Giving his hair one last tousle, Deku pulled Katsuki down to give him a loud kiss on the forehead before spinning him to face the door to the girl's wing of the dorm.

Katsuki could just barely see Eijirou reel his hand back and felt dread pierce through his gut.

"Go get 'em, king!" Eijirou said brightly before bringing his hand down with such speed and force against his ass that it sent him *literally into the air* and through the door. It was only a lifetime of training and his freakish reflexes that saved him from landing face-first on the ground, instead stumbling through the door with a hiss of pain.

What.

The *fuck*.

Had just happened?

Katsuki was still standing in the hallway, rubbing his sore asscheek with one hand and trying to figure out what past transgression karma had just gotten back at him for, when the door down the hall opened and Ochako poked her head out. He immediately straightened up, shoving his hand in his pocket and praying he looked like he *hadn't* just been propelled through the air by his butt.

"Bakugou?" she asked, cocking her head curiously. "Was that you screaming?!"

"Would you believe me if I said no?" Katsuki said exasperatedly.

Ochako snorted at him and smiled brightly, and all the tension that had been winding tighter and tighter across his shoulders and back since the moment he left his dad's fashion house just melted away. It always surprised him how easily she could do that; one smile from her and the world came to a gentle halt and he found it a million times easier to breathe.

"Wanna explain?" she asked with laughter in her voice, and Katsuki just groaned as he walked to her door.

"Nope. In fact, I'm gonna just block the past ten minutes out from my memory entirely, and we're not gonna mention it ever again," he grumbled. Ochako just laughed at his overdramatic ass, and he had to smother a smile. Fuck, she was pretty when she laughed. "Move your ass, Cheeks," he growled gently as he towered over her in the doorway. "Come on, I've been out all day."

"Oh, my deepest apologies, your Highness," Ochako drawled teasingly, hip-checking him before dramatically bowing out of his way and gesturing him into her room. "I forgot this was your throne room."

Katsuki rolled his eyes and allowed himself a smile. "Smartass," he said far more fondly than he had intended to. He tapped his knuckle against her forehead and chuckled when she immediately pouted at him, though she didn't stop him from coming into her room. Not that she would; they were long past the point where they had to sincerely ask to come in. Ochako would still text him first if she ever wanted to visit his dorm, because she was polite and knew he liked his privacy and to have a neat room whenever he had someone over, but he never said no.

(Had he spent the first week of third year *highly distracted* because Ochako had given him the key to her dorm and it now sat snuggly next to his on his keychain? ... Maybe.)

"How was lunch with your dad?" Ochako asked as she followed him into her room, letting the door close on its own.

Katsuki shrugged, hanging the garment bag off the hook that hung off the top of her closet door and resisting the urge to smooth out any wrinkles he found and fuss over it obsessively. It wouldn't do him any good at this point; he was already here.

"Fine," he said, changing course and heading towards her bed. Ochako stood in the way, looking up at him with those big brown eyes that he

was sure could topple nations if she was in the right mood.

She hadn't bothered to straighten her hair like she usually did, instead letting it frame her round face in loose curls. He hadn't even known her hair was naturally curly until they'd been teamed up for almost a month, and ever since he had found out, he'd been subtly trying to push her to leave it in its natural state more often. He was making progress, and now had to deal with the realization that seeing her hair all cute and fluffy and springy made him want to bury his fingers in it even more.

Oh well. Of all of the metaphorical beds Katsuki had made for himself over the years, this was one of the ones he didn't mind lying in.

"Come on, Bakugou, give me more than that," Ochako teased, reaching up to flick some of his bangs out of his eyes before her hand dropped to his shoulder, then trailed down his chest. She touched his chest every time they saw each other after being separated for longer than usual, and at this point, he wondered if she was even aware she did it; if she knew that her fingers didn't leave his body until they had run over the messy scar at the center of his chest that he'd gotten in first year. "How's your dad? I haven't seen him in a while."

Katsuki grinned. "I said," he started with a drawl, ducking low and wrapping his arms around Ochako's waist before she could protest, "he's fine!"

He lifted her up into the air, braced against his own chest, and she let out a shriek of laughter as he carried her towards her bed. All the dorms were fucking tiny, so it barely took him two long strides to cross the room and throw them both down onto her freshly-made bed.

Ochako was giggling like mad, squirming in his hold and pushing half-heartedly at his shoulders while her cheeks grew even pinker in her amusement. "Bakugou! You ass!" she exclaimed, but Katsuki only grinned at her and held on tighter.

Fuck, *this* was how he wanted to spend his day off. Wrapped up in her, watching her eyes light up from within as she giggled helplessly. Actually, this was just how he wanted to spend his free time in general.

"You are so ridiculous, I swear," Ochako said as her giggling began to die down and the two shifted into a more comfortable position. Her fingers combed through his hair softly before scratching that one spot only she could find, and Katsuki melted even as sparks raced up and

down the length of his spine.

“Yeah yeah, so you keep telling me.” His eyes slipped closed as Ochako kept playing with his hair, feeling the stress from the past week slowly drain away. It was so easy to get lost in her; even in a room filled with other people, he instinctively sought her out and was never properly at ease until he met her eyes. When they were alone, when Ochako’s attention was all on him, it was almost overwhelming. She gave her love so freely, and when he was the only person around for her to lavish in affection, she didn’t hold back. He soaked her in greedily, like if he just clung on a little longer and kept her to himself for just a moment more, he’d finally fill to bursting with *her* and he’d finally be satisfied.

It almost felt like being eternally caught in the moment before his Quirk lit up; when the air was simmering with imminent heat and destruction and the world seemed silent as if waiting for the explosion. His nerves were alight with excitement and anticipation for the collapse then rush of a single moment expanding into thousands, of being propelled into the air and hovering weightless for a moment before gravity took hold once more and pulled him down with grasping, possessive hands.

He didn’t know what would happen when the explosion came. When they collided and he finally lost the last tenuous thread holding back his love for her and blurted it out like a fucking moron.

If she even felt the mounting, waiting tension that surrounded them as he did.

Katsuki tried not to think about it too much.

His hold on her waist had gone loose as he’d relaxed more and more, and Ochako had thrown her leg over his waist like the little clingy monkey she was. He could have easily fallen asleep like that, but Ochako spoke up before he could drift off into a much desired nap.

“Did you get your suit for the Gala?” she asked softly, and Katsuki hummed curiously at her. “The garment bag,” she elaborated, looking back down at him and pointing to her closet. “That’s the brand your dad designs for, right?”

Well, *now* he was wide awake.

Not one to look a convenient-segway horse in the mouth, but enough of a jackass to want to make her kinda work for it, Katsuki shook his

head. "Nah. Got fitted, though. They have alterations to make." Shockingly , most models didn't exactly have his shoulder-to-waist ratio, tailored specifically to support his Quirk and carefully honed by hours in UA's gym.

Looking through his bangs sneakily, Katsuki watched Ochako's face scrunch up with confusion. She was smart, she'd figure it out sooner rather than later. "Then what's in the-" she stopped with a sharp little breath, her head snapping around to look back down at him. Katsuki blinked up at her, the perfect picture of disinterested innocence were it not for the way the corner of his twitching mouth betrayed the smirk he was holding back. "*Bakugou Katsuki* , you did not!" Ochako gasped, punching his shoulder *hard*.

The bruise was worth hearing her say his name like that. One of these days he was going to get her to call him Katsuki and he was going to rupture an artery on the goddamn spot.

It was his turn to laugh as Ochako wiggled and squirmed her way out of his arms, scrambling onto her knees and grabbing the first pillow her fingers touched to beat him over the head with. He covered his head with his arms, grinning widely as Ochako made this long, flustered whining noise as her words failed her. After a minute of Death By Pillow, Katsuki snatched it out of her hands and lunged forward; smothering her briefly as he pushed her onto her back, before pulling it down to reveal her flushed face and angry pout.

"You done?" he asked, smirking. Ochako stuck her tongue out at him. "Cheeks, you got me what I'm wearing for the Gala," he explained. "Besides, I can guarantee I paid less than you."

"For a *designer dress!*?"

"It was a show dress from last season. It already walked the runway and they couldn't sell it; my old man practically shoved it at me." It wasn't... *entirely* a lie. It *was* a dress meant to walk at a fashion show, and his dad *had* shoved it at him, but it was part of the line premiering at some upcoming event. Masaru and his partner both agreed that having it premier at the Hero's Gala -one of the most important events for heroes in the year- instead was a worthy trade off. Ochako, despite still being a student, was well-known and well-liked by the public, after all. Winning the Sports Festival with him this year had just rocketed her that much higher in the public's esteem, and she was going to hit the pro-hero scene running at Mach 5.

Ochako still didn't look convinced, eyebrows furrowed in conflict.

"You know you weren't going to get away with wearing your black dress again," he pressed gently.

"Excuse you; the little black dress is a *classic!*"

"Not when it's one wrong look away from literally falling apart at the seams. Due to this thing called '*the natural passage of time*', you are not the same size you were in first year." Katsuki smirked. "Shocking, I know."

"I'm also not the same size as a supermodel, Bakugou," Ochako said in a small voice, hand going towards the soft curve of her stomach that no amount of crunches had been able to get rid of. *Thank god*, in Katsuki's opinion; he liked that she was soft and round. The muscles underneath were just as deadly as his six pack, and he had it on pretty good authority that she was a lot nicer to hold.

"Stop that," he said firmly, catching her wrist and pinning it to her side. "The brand has plenty of diverse models, Cheeks. The dress was tailored to one close to your size, promise." Her eyes flicked up to his and the corner of her lip pulled up in a tiny smirk.

"How you knew my size is a question I really don't think I want to know the answer to." She echoed him with an expression that betrayed how proud of herself she was, and he laughed.

"I'm allowed a few secrets of my own," Katsuki said with a smirk. In truth, when Masaru had first asked for an idea of Ochako's size so they could narrow their search down, Katsuki had immediately brought his hands up to demonstrate her height and the width of her shoulders and hips in comparison to his own body with embarrassing speed and accuracy. His only consolation was that they hadn't video called his mom yet at that point, so the odds of Ochako hearing about *that* particular moment were slim.

At least his dad kept the teasing to himself.

"Look, just try it on. If you hate it, I'll take it back and we can get you a new black dress at the discount shop," he said, although a little part of him died at the suggestion. His dad might just finally snap and kill him if he let Ochako go to the *Hero's Gala* in a goddamn bargain dress.

Ochako blinked up at him. "Did you pick it out?"

Katsuki's ears burned a little. Masaru had video-called Katsuki's mother and the three of them -with occasional input from Masaru's partner- had looked together through the racks, but Katsuki was the one who had found the final dress. It had been the clear winner to all of them, even moreso when Katsuki had shown them the shirt Ochako had gotten him and that he'd be wearing to the Gala.

"Yes."

Ochako grinned. "Then I'll like it," she said with soft confidence, and goddamnit why did she have to say shit like that with no warning!? He was already in love with her! She didn't have to fucking convince him anymore! This wasn't good for his health.

He hadn't quite found his tongue again yet when Ochako gently pushed him up and back so she could stand and walk towards the closet. Katsuki watched her silently, crossing his ankles and draping his wrists over his knees in an attempt to look more relaxed than he felt. Likely a wasted effort around Ochako -she seemed to understand him better than he did, most days- but hey, no one could say he didn't try.

She hesitated before the garment bag, looking back at him as if to get permission, and at his encouraging nod Ochako took hold of the zipper and pulled it carefully all the way down.

Organza and lace spilled out at the bottom even before she could properly open the bag to see what was within. She stood back upright and opened the bag more to see the dress and almost immediately withdrew her hands to press over her mouth as she stumbled back with a gasp. Katsuki sat up straight, barely biting back his panicked questions as his heart kicked into overdrive inside his chest.

Ochako looked back at him with her eyes the size of the moon, huge and watery over the horizon line of her hands. She looked at the dress, then at him again a few times before finally letting out a small whimper, and Katsuki was on his feet in a heartbeat.

"Hey, talk to me, Uraraka," he said softly, ignoring the disappointment twisting and curling in his gut. "What's wrong?" Her head snapped around so fast he was almost worried for her health.

"Wro- Bakugou!" she said, eyes filled with tears. "Are you kidding me!? It's *gorgeous*, oh my god!" Ochako let out a little laugh as she finally brought her hands down, revealing a wide, gorgeous smile that Katsuki immediately wanted to imprint into his genetic code. Her

hands instead pressed to her chest as she struggled to fight back tears, looking at the dress again with what he could now recognize as wonder.

Fuck. If there had been any doubt before -and there *really* hadn't been-, he was sure now: he was *so* stupid in love with this girl. He felt a welling of affection so strong and intense he had to physically restrain himself from pulling her into his arms and burying his face in her hair until it passed.

Ochako approached the garment bag again, reverently, and pulled back the flaps until she could take in the dress in its entirety. It was a deep, rich maroon in color, with a closely fitted silk bodice decorated with gold lace and beading. It came up to the neck, although there was a keyhole opening that would reveal just a hint of cleavage, and from the halter top hung three golden chains on each side that would loop around her arms in place of traditional sleeves. The floor-length skirt itself was like a grown-up version of the puffy skirts Ochako tended to lean towards; layers of silk and organza flowed from the hips like flower petals, golden beading fading into the bottom of each piece and golden lace curling along the hem.

Ochako reached for the gown with shaking hands, barely daring to run her rough fingerpads along the bodice before pulling them back sharply. "Oh my god," she whispered again.

"You gotta try it on, Cheeks," Katsuki said with no small amount of humor, though he kept his voice just as low as hers.

"I-I- Bakugou, I can't wear this," she wheezed. "It's too beautiful."

"*So are you!*" he wanted to scream, but bit it back just in time. "Just try it."

"I'll *ruin* it! Are you kidding me? Oh my god, I've never- I-I couldn't-" She was way too deep in her head, working herself up into a proper lather about it, so Katsuki wrapped his arm around her shoulders and pressed her back against his chest before it could turn into a panic attack.

"Yes, you could," he said calmly, chin resting on the crown of her head. "And no, you wouldn't ruin it. It's just a dress, Uraraka, I promise; my dad wouldn't have let it out of the building if it wasn't something they could replace or mend." His touch seemed to ground her, and her shaking breathing seemed to even slowly out. He hugged her tighter. "Just try it on, that's all I'm asking. You don't have to

show it to anyone but me.”

Ochako slowly reached up, clinging to his forearm with her pinkies up. She looked up at him with those big brown eyes he adored, and he couldn’t resist the urge to nudge his nose against her head. “Just... you?” she asked.

“Just me, Cheeks.”

A few quiet moments passed before she took a deep breath, nodding a little to herself. “Okay. Just you,” Ochako murmured, cheeks puffing up like they did when she was trying to psych herself up, and he barely bit back his amused chuckle. Instead, he let her go so she could delicately lift the dress from its temporary hook and take it into the closet. “No peeking,” she instructed, and Katsuki pressed a hand to his chest.

“You wound my honor,” he said dryly, “truly.” That managed to get a smile from her before the door closed, and he counted that as a victory.

Katsuki went back to the bed, smoothing out some of the mess they’d made with their wrestling earlier before plopping himself right back down so he was facing the wall. He could just barely make out the sounds of her shuffling behind the door, along with a gasp that he assumed meant that she had finally seen the back. Despite the seconds seeming to drag on for *hours*, he heard the door open maybe five minutes later.

“How’s it feel?” Katsuki asked without turning around. “The model was a little taller than you, but if you’re thinking of wearing heels it should be fine.” Ochako was silent, and the urge to turn around was beaten out only by his desire Not To Be A Jackass For Once.

“Uraraka?”

“I can’t look.”

“What?”

“I-I can’t look, Bakugou.” Her voice was small. “I... what if it looks terrible on me?”

“I highly fucking doubt that,” Katsuki reassured, but Ochako didn’t respond. He sighed softly. “Can I turn around?” he asked, and after a moment, heard Ochako hum her consent. He took a quiet, fortifying breath before turning on his butt.

And immediately felt all the air leave the entire fucking building. If not the atmosphere.

Oh, he was so fucked.

Ochako had her eyes closed and her fingers tangled nervously together in front of her, but even with those signs of discomfort she looked almost ethereal.

The color of the dress complimented her skin beautifully, bringing out the depth of color on her perpetually flushed cheeks. The silk bodice clung to her like a glove, modest but with a tease of cleavage that could have made him a religious man, and the chain accents sparkled and curved around her muscular arms; the red beads and pearls dangling from the chain almost blending in with her faint freckles. The skirt curled around her hips like it had been made *just* for her; moving and shifting with her like it *knew* she had the laws of gravity by the balls and thus could afford to break the rules a little if she liked.

Her bare toes peeked out from under the skirt and her hair was just a little messier after changing, and Katsuki had never wanted to kiss her so much in his entire *life*.

“Bakugou?” she asked nervously, eyes still shut.

“I- yeah, Cheeks, I’m-” he stammered hopelessly, feeling vaguely like he’d been hit by a truck. “You-”

“It’s awful, isn’t it?”

“For my health, maybe,” he said before thinking, and her eyebrows shot up over her closed eyes. Katsuki stood quickly before she could follow up on that particular statement, instead taking one of her hands in his own and lifting it a little over her head. The chains jangled and sang quietly as she moved, and he was never going to be able to hear the sound of rattling chains without thinking about this *exact* moment ever again.

“Turn?” he asked in a rough voice, and Ochako nodded.

She moved slowly in a circle under his arm, silently, so his sharp inhale was like a gunshot in the quiet room when he saw the back of the dress for the first time. The back was completely open from the bottom of her neck to the small curve of her back, with only a single gold chain hanging down to break up the view of her gorgeously

sculpted back. The chain ‘sleeves’ met with this chain right between her shoulder blades, a single, large pearl hanging just below, and keeping everything in place with its weight. Katsuki barely absorbed the rest of her rotation; heavily distracted by the bared skin and trying to keep from spinning her back around and worshiping the curve of her spine with his fucking mouth.

“I-I’m gonna take it off-” Ochako started nervously.

Oh hell *no* she wasn’t. “No, the fuck you’re not,” he growled, grabbing her by the shoulders when she attempted to make a break back for the closet. “Mirror, now.”

“Bakugooou!” she whined, not struggling against him likely out of fear of stepping on the skirt. He ignored her protest and marched them to the front of the long mirror she had hanging on the wall, leaving her only to open up the curtains in front of her balcony to let in more natural light. Katsuki came back, catching her hands in his and standing behind her so he could see them both in the mirror.

“Why are you scared to open your eyes?” he asked in a low voice, bending down so he could speak closer to her ear. Ochako shuddered against him, and for the sake of his sanity, he was not going to think about that too hard.

“I don’t-” She sighed. “Girls like me don’t wear dresses like this, Bakugou.”

“What the fuck does that even mean?” Katsuki grumbled. “There *are no* girls like you, Uraraka. Why the fuck do you think I partnered up with you?”

She didn’t have an answer for that.

Katsuki sighed. “Uraraka,” he started, “the Hero’s Gala is your chance to show the world exactly what kind of a hero you are. Not who they want you to be, not what they think you should be- who *you* are. ‘*Girls like you*’ don’t wear beautiful dresses? Then you aren’t that kind of girl anymore. Fuck that entire train of thought, actually, and so help me I will drag Telltale Heart in here to give you his whole ‘*identity and perception of self is an illusion forced on us by society*’ speech.”

Ochako giggled wetly, clutching his fingers a little tighter in appreciation. He grinned, knocking his chin gently against the side of her head.

“You’re a badass, Cheeks,” he continued. “Always have been. You’re going to rule the fucking world the minute you debut, okay?”

Announce your hostile takeover in style.” *That* managed to get a full belly laugh, and Katsuki puffed up a little with pride. Ochako was smiling now, eyes still shut but her entire face lit up and flushed prettily. She was so goddamn gorgeous he didn’t even know what to do with himself.

“You think so?” she asked, and Katsuki could feel his entire body go soft. When he glanced in the mirror, the expression on his face was a perfect echo of his father’s earlier that afternoon when he was talking to his wife on the phone. A boy helplessly in love with a force of nature; inevitable and unavoidable.

He couldn’t have stopped himself from falling in love with her if he’d tried.

“I know so,” Katsuki murmured, squeezing her hands tight. “You and me, Uraraka. They won’t even know what hit ‘em.”

Ochako took a deep breath and let it out slow, sinking back into his embrace with a warm smile. “Thanks, Hero,” she whispered, and his heart tripped right out of his chest. Fuck, he loved it when she called him that.

He just barely pressed his lips to the side of her head. “Open your eyes.”

Katsuki watched in the mirror as her eyes fluttered open, lighting up with a rush of emotions he couldn’t *begin* to pick apart as she looked at them both. She let out a little giggle as tears welled up, letting go of his hands to lift her skirt and swish it back and forth. His hands went to her hips instead. He didn’t want to let go.

“It’s so beautiful,” she breathed, and Katsuki smiled.

“Looks better now than the hanger,” he told her, and Ochako giggled cutely. He reached up, gathering up her shoulder-length curls and twisting them gently up and out of the way so only her bangs and few loose curls remained. “What do you think: up or down?” he teased, and Ochako laughed brightly and he fell in love with her all over again.

“Are you seriously trying to do girl talk right now?” she asked, and Katsuki shrugged.

“Trying, yes. I don’t do fancy dresses often. How’m I doin’?”

“Nailing it, big guy,” she teased back.

He opened his mouth to respond, but there was a sudden, rapid knocking on Ochako’s door. They both looked up, glancing at each other in confusion.

“BAKUGOU!” Mina hollered from the hallway, and Katsuki didn’t know whether to laugh or be annoyed. *Fucking Eijirou-* and he wondered why no one told him secrets anymore (at least, small harmless ones). “I KNOW YOU’RE IN THERE! I can not *believe* you brought back *designer clothes* and did not *immediately* come to me!! You ass!!!”

Ochako was giggling helplessly, trying to muffle herself into her hands. Katsuki grinned at her, letting her hair fall back around her shoulders as he slid his hands into his pockets. “What do you think,” he asked, “should we let her in?”

“Seems cruel not to,” she joked as Mina made a sound like a squirrel being run over by a very slow truck.

“You sure?” he asked more seriously. Best friend or not, he wasn’t against kicking Mina back into the elevator and sending her back down to the Hell from whence she came, and told Ochako as much. She had been pretty nervous before.

Now, she just smiled at him and patted his chest playfully, tugging him down by the collar and kissing his cheek. “Positive, Rocketman,” she reassured while he tried to remember how *breathing* worked. “Let the devil in.”

Mina was back to just banging on the door, and Katsuki had to try three times to yell “*JUST COME IN!*” loud enough for her to hear. The door immediately swung open into the hallway and Mina burst into the room.

“Ugh, finally!” she whined. “Now, lemme see the-”

She stopped dead in her tracks, black and gold eyes wide as she took in the beaming Ochako in her borrowed dress.

And promptly burst into happy tears.

Chapter End Notes

Big shout out once again to Nicki for betaing this chapter for me and making sure it's legible lol. You are a Queen and I adore you <3

And with that, Act 2 is done! Two more chapters to go; one in Ochako's POV and one in Kat's, and I'm really excited for both. Thank you guys so much for all your support both here and on Twitter, it means the absolute world to me and I am so excited at the thought that I could possibly have this fic completed before the end of the year. No promises! But maybe.

The dress is my own design, and for those who are having trouble imagining the skirt, just think Glinda's blue dress from Wicked if you took away like,,, the *majority* of the floof lol. I'll be posting a sketch on my twitter later today so come find me
@uravitynogravit

SPOILER WARNING! Look, I had her touch his chest in chapter two and I couldn't resist okay let me have my emotions about Bakugou getting [redacted].

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Let's Go To A Gala, Y'all!

In which Tsuyu is Best Girl, Ochako has Midoriya Trauma, and Bakugou is a chatty motherfucker jesus christ-

SPOILER WARNING! There are some blink-and-you-miss-it spoilers for the current arc of the manga, though only up to 299. If you don't know, you probably won't see them, but thought it better to mention now. I haven't let it affect this fic too badly, since I planned it before I was keeping up with the manga.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Ochako made it about an hour and a half into the evening before she had to excuse herself and go hunt down one of her friends. Tsuyu was the closest, chatting amicably with her former mentor Selkie and some of his sidekicks, and Ochako only had to wave her down and give her one pleading look for the other girl to break away from the conversation as quickly as was politely possible. Ochako led her to the women's bathroom, some of the tension leaving her shoulders when Tsuyu's small hand slipped into hers and squeezed reassuringly.

They made it inside, and after barely glancing at the stalls to make sure they were empty and that the two girls were alone, Ochako spun around and asked desperately, "Am I on a date right now?"

Tsuyu blinked at her.

"Kero?"

"With Bakugou," Ochako explained. "Am I on a date with Bakugou right now?"

Tsuyu blinked at her again. Which, all things considered, was not helping her anxiety. "Don't you think that's a question you should ask, I don't know, Bakugou?"

Ochako clawed her hands like she was attempting to wring Tsuyu's neck with her mind. God, she adored the smaller girl with all her heart, but sometimes Tsuyu was too rational for her own good.

"Indulge me for like ten minutes and pretend you, like the rest of us, have no common sense, and help me work this out, please!"

Hands help up defensively, Tsuyu nodded. "Right, right. Sorry." She lowered her hands and gestures to the padded bench that was pressed against the bathroom wall. The hotel the Gala was being hosted at was the kind of fancy that made Ochako's skin itch with the fear that one wrong move could break or ruin something more expensive than anything she'd ever owned, but the waiting area with the huge mirror and the various benches and chairs was a nice backdrop to have during her meltdown. Ochako almost threw herself onto the bench, but remembered her dress at the last moment and sat down carefully instead.

She smoothed her fingers along the golden lace and beading that curved at the end of each of the skirt's petals. God, she still couldn't believe she was wearing a *designer dress* to the *Hero's Gala*.

"Okay," Tsuyu said, bringing Ochako back from her musings and to the crisis at hand. "What makes you think you're on a date with Bakugou?"

Where to even *begin*.

The night had started off normally enough; all the girls from 3-A and 3-B - and Aoyoma - had gone to Momo's house to get ready, taking advantage of her spa-like amenities and helpful staff to get ready for their debut. Mrs. Yaoyorozu had even helped Ochako with her hair, letting her borrow a golden pin with burgundy silk flowers to hold up some of the curls that Mina had painstakingly set in her hair. Ochako had been so nervous and overwhelmed, unable to reconcile that the beautiful woman in the mirror with the silky brown curls and kohl painted eyes was really *her*.

It hadn't been until the boys came to pick them up, riding in two limousines provided by Iida's family, that Ochako had felt *ready*. Not until she stood at the top of the stairs and saw Bakugou standing alone at the bottom, waiting for her with a wide, fond smile and a look in his red eyes that made her heart flip like an acrobat.

He had offered her his arm like a perfect gentleman, even though his rakish grin and teasing use of her nickname made her giggle helplessly. He didn't move away from her for even a second after, staying at her side through all the millions of pictures Momo's parents insisted on. Ochako had caught a glimpse of them together in one of the hall mirrors and lost her breath; him, tall and strong and

handsome in a burgundy suit a few shades darker than her dress and the shirt she had gotten for him, and her, wrapped in silk and jewels and pearls and every part his equal. She'd never felt so powerful in her life, and judging by the way he'd smiled at her, Bakugou could tell.

The drive to the Gala was full of laughter and jokes from all of her classmates, trying to work off their nervous, excited energy while Iida tried one last time to refresh them on all the tips Mount Lady had drilled into their heads during her PR seminars over the years. Ochako had barely heard him, too distracted by Bakugou's hand on her knee and his voice whispering against her ear, "*Relax, Cheeks. Announce our takeover in style, remember?*"

It was impossible to be nervous when Bakugou had every confidence in her, his words from the other day still ringing in her head, nonstop since he'd first whispered them.

"*You and me, Uraraka.*"

"*You and me, Uraraka.*"

"*You and me, Uraraka.*"

He'd been saying that a lot recently. *Us. We. Our.* Since the beginning of their partnership, he'd treated her like an important part of the team. Someone he respected, even when he pushed her buttons as they were first feeling each other - and this partnership - out and made her want to scream. But now he talked about her like they were a *unit*; less partners and more parts of the same whole.

It should have scared her more than it excited and soothed her.

They'd walked the red carpet together, Bakugou's hand firm on her waist as they stopped for photos and the occasional question. They were a well-known duo, Dynamight and Uravity, and as always, the media ate it up. When they'd walked inside, Ochako expected to be running after him all night, chasing him as he bounced from pro to pro and tried to do some more last-minute networking before graduation in a week. But instead he'd held firm to her and they'd made their rounds before the ceremony together. There wasn't a single pro in the room that they had spoken to that hadn't learned her name first if Bakugou was the one doing the introducing, and Ochako's heart had been trying to beat out of her chest the whole time.

He'd been so attentive and courteous (in his own way) all night. Never far from her side unless he was pulled away, and even then he kept

one eye on her even from across the room. He always came back to her, squeezing her hand in his own, and usually with a look in his eyes that if she hadn't known better, she might have thought was adoration.

It was a lot.

She told Tsuyu as much, detailing the whole night and Bakugou's behavior towards her. Tsuyu, bless her, just let her talk, expression neutral but open. She nodded, holding out her hands so Ochako could grip them tightly.

"Yeah, that definitely sounds like a date," she said eventually, and Ochako perked up even as her stomach twisted in knots.

"Really?"

"Yeah. Admittedly, it sounds more like the date of a couple that's been married for five years instead of a first date," she mused, "but you two always act like that."

Ochako blushed. "Tsu!"

Tsuyu did not look the least bit apologetic. "I'm not wrong. I've had to reassure Iida a few times that you two didn't elope on a mission without telling him."

"Just Iida?"

"Please, if you two eloped, it doesn't matter where you would be or how sudden it was; Midoriya would know and he would be standing by the alter at Bakugou's side." They both giggled at that, Ochako picturing all too clearly an eager and teary Deku standing next to an exasperated Bakugou. God forbid if Kirishima was there, too.

"That's not the point!" Ochako said between dying giggles, carefully wiping her eyes so as to not smudge her makeup.

"No, it's not. So let me rephrase my question; what's stopping you from thinking you're on a date with Bakugou?"

He didn't ask.

Old, familiar dread spun in her stomach, leeching away the last of her mirth as she looked down at their joined hands. "It could just be PR," she muttered. "It's our last big event before graduation, and even if we

don't stay partners, it's good to be seen together. You remember how much Mount Lady gushed over the two of us when she found out we were testing out a possible partnership."

Under the cold light of logic, away from her own feelings, Ochako could admit Mount Lady was right. The two of them being partnered together was one of the best things they could have done while establishing themselves in the public eye. Ochako softened all of Bakugou's harshest edges, and he made her impossible to dismiss as weak or one-note. Separately, they were two members of the strongest group of students to ever emerge from UA's halls. Together they were Dynamight and Uravity, two standout heroes who bounced between rescue and combat with an ease most pros couldn't even nail down.

Tsuyu hummed. "I don't think that's quite it, but you also aren't wrong," she started, finger to her chin as she thought. "Bakugou knows how important this event is for our careers." Ochako felt her heart sink. Of course he did, he was too smart not to. He was the one who told her again and again that the Gala wasn't just a party, it was the beginning of their careers as pro heroes.

"So then," Tsuyu continued, stopping Ochako's downwards spiral, "don't you think it says something that Bakugou is making sure to debut with *you*?"

"... How do you mean?"

"You were too busy with the hearts in your eyes to notice," Tsuyu said bluntly, her lip curling in a fond smile when Ochako's blush deepened, "but you two were the only ones to walk the carpet together. Even Kirishima and Mina went separately, and they've been dating for a year and a half."

Had it really only been them? Mina had wanted a billion photos of her and Kirishima together at the Yaoyorozu manor, no way would she pass up a chance to have her first red carpet photo with her boyfriend. Even Iida and Momo had been sticking together most of the night for some reason; floating together through the crowd like impossibly beautiful ethereal beings, talking with more investors and politicians than pro-heroes, strangely enough.

"Okay, so why does that matter?" Ochako asked, and Tsuyu patted her hand.

"Because when people look back on the start of Dynamight's official career, for the rest of your lives, they're going to see *you* right there

next to him. He's never going to be *just* Dynamight. Considering Bakugou, that feels like a lot."

It did. So much so that Ochako was stunned silent. There's no way Bakugou didn't consider that, that he didn't *know*. Being a hero was *everything* to him, the be-all, end-all of an entire lifetime of hard work and devotion.

So what the hell did that mean for *them*?

"That doesn't answer my date question," Ochako said weakly, and Tsuyu cocked her head.

"Doesn't it?"

"Tsu, you know it doesn't."

"You're obviously important to him."

"Yeah, well," Ochako said bitterly, her hands slipping away from Tsuyu's as she slumped against the wall and felt the chill of the chains draped around her shoulders pressing into her skin, "I was important to Deku, too."

The room went quiet for a moment, and Ochako wanted to rip the words back out of the air. She hadn't meant to say that, didn't want to bring it up. She'd been doing so well, too!

"So," Tsuyu said softly. "*That's* what this is about."

"It's not—" Ochako started, but Tsuyu was already shaking her head.

"You said it."

"Is this when I remind you that Freud was a hack and that his work belongs in the trash bin of history?"

"Penis envy is bullshit, you having Midoriya Trauma isn't."

That managed to startle a laugh out of Ochako, and even Tsuyu giggled for a moment. "Is that what we're calling it?" Ochako asked, grinning.

Tsuyu nodded. "I'm writing a dissertation on it for Hound Dog's final," she said dryly, and Ochako snorted again. "Ochako, Bakugou isn't Midoriya," she said softly.

“I know that!” They were similar in many ways, their hearts forged from the same stardust in different shapes, but they were still very different people. It was - to Ochako’s estimation - the cause of about seventy-five percent of the issues they’d had back in their first year. The rest was probably some combination of nature and nurture, and she’d already risked her life once to call Mitsuki Bakugou out on it.

(It had been worth it. That had been the night when Bakugou had curled around her in her bed for the first time and hugged her tight with the force of his emotions and all the words he hadn’t been able to say. Mitsuki also seemed to respect her more after.)

“Then why are you worried about Bakugou acting like him?”

She wasn’t worried that Bakugou would make the same mistake that Deku had, that he would hurt her the same way her best friend had. She was worried it would be *worse*.

It had been the end of first year, after... well, everything. Everyone had been desperate for some normalcy as their world collapsed around them, and when Deku had asked Ochako if she wanted to go into town with him for a day, she’d been overjoyed. A date with the cute boy she had a crush on was the most normal thing in the world, and if they were lucky, they wouldn’t even be ambushed by a villain hellbent on killing them both before dessert.

She’d been eager and giddy for a whole week, the other girls all rising to the occasion and pushing aside their exhaustion and grief to siphon off some of the innocent, excited joy of a girl getting ready for her first date.

And then she showed up at the gates and found Deku surrounded by Iida, Todoroki, and Shinsou, all ready to go out together. A friendly outing for the group. Not a date at all.

Ochako had hidden her disappointment - poorly, judging by how Todoroki and Iida had hovered protectively around her and even Shinsou had seemed to watch her carefully - until the end of the night, when she’d managed to get Deku alone and asked for an explanation. Why the date she had been expecting hadn’t come to fruition. Why he’d made it sound like it would be just the two of them if that had never been his intention.

Deku had gotten so flustered, stammering and tripping over his words as he tried to answer her questions and process her quasi-confession at the same time. And in his confusion, he did what he always did; he

analysed it. Went to the heart of his confusion and talked himself through it under his breath, mumbling aloud. The pros and cons of dating her, of what being attracted to her would be like, what the benefits would be and what was holding him back.

Ochako had stood there - shocked, embarrassed, and heartbroken - as Deku spread out her virtues and flaws in front of her as he tried to mash them into place, until she was something he could categorize and decide if she was worth the trouble.

Had she and Bakugou been close at the time, he might have been impressed at how, even through her tears, she was able to dislocate Deku's jaw with one swing.

They didn't speak for *months* after that, Ochako too fragile from everything else in their lives to put on a brave face and pretend she wasn't hurt. It had nearly destroyed their group of friends; Tsuyu and Momo had rallied around her without hesitation, with Tsuyu and Deku getting into the worst fight of their friendship as a result. Iida had made himself into a barrier between the two, shielding Ochako from Deku's misguided attempts to fix things, although she knew it hurt him to treat his best friend like a villain. Poor Todoroki had stayed by Deku's side, too new to this kind of friendship to know how to handle a break like this, but the few times Ochako and Todoroki had interacted, she could see how much he missed her. How much he missed all of them being together.

It was the fight that had nearly destroyed what the other students called the Dekusquad. It had also opened the door for Ochako's friendship and partnership with Bakugou, and she'd been trying to separate the two events ever since.

Every time she thought Bakugou might like her, that this building pressure between them was something he could sense as well and he was waiting for the explosion just as eagerly and frightfully as she was, Deku's voice would whisper all her flaws in her ears. That dating was a distraction for a budding hero, that she was a rival before a romantic partner, that she might be a good partner to appeal to the public, but that she might be equally as likely to keep anyone who dated her from being taken seriously.

She had thought Deku liked her, and that assumption had nearly destroyed them. Ochako couldn't risk that with Bakugou, she wouldn't survive it. He was too important to her.

“I just don’t want to assume again,” Ochako said quietly as Tsuyu reached out for her hands. She gave them a tight squeeze and Ochako smiled shakily.

“Ochako-” Tsuyu began, but the two were interrupted when the door to the bathrooms burst open.

“It’s officially been ten minutes since you rushed in here,” Aoyoma said as he strode into the bathroom like a general going to war, the click of his heels louder than a twenty-one gun salute. “That’s the disaster threshold, and I am here to save the day, *mes chéris*. I am prepared for anything! So, what’s the problem?”

He stopped in front of the two, looking Ochako over critically. His long hair had been pulled over his shoulder, the golden strands matched almost eerily perfectly to the golden embroidery on his suit jacket. The corset he wore underneath, showing off his navel laser, was a similar shade. He was already digging through his clutch.

“Period, blister, running makeup? Or,” he gasped, “please don’t say ‘*dress malfunction*’, if anything happens to this masterpiece I *will* cry on the spot.”

Ochako could only blink up at him owlishly while Tsuyu smiled. “Ochako’s not sure if she and Bakugou are on a date right now,” she explained dryly, and Aoyoma’s shoulders dropped.

“*Babe*,” he said, looking at Ochako with an exasperated frown.

“He didn’t ask!” Ochako said defensively. Aoyoma sat primly on the bench behind her, straightening out the chain sleeves of her dress and pinning away any flyaways with deft fingers.

“If you’re not on a date, then someone should really tell Bakugou that,” he said fondly. “Boy’s been looking like a lost puppy ever since you left him alone.”

“He has not,” Ochako began, only to yelp when Aoyoma gently flicked her ear.

“I know what I saw, don’t question me.” Aoyoma had become the type of hero that demanded attention and respect over the past three years, coming into his own with the kind of grace and poise that would have made Midnight cry with pride.

Ochako just huffed, letting her friend fuss over her before slinging his arms around her waist and giving her a tight hug. She sank into his

embrace with a giggle.

“Like I was saying before,” Tsuyu began, still holding onto Ochako’s hands. “I don’t think you have to worry about what happened with Midoriya happening again with Bakugou. You’ve been friends for three years, practically joined at the hip for half that time; you know Bakugou now way better than you knew Midoriya then.”

“Plus, Midoriya is a special kind of clueless,” Aoyoma added, sliding into the conversation seamlessly. He was one of the few outside of the Dekusquad who knew the truth about what had happened between Ochako and Deku; even Bakugou didn’t know the whole story. “I mean, he and Tsu are basically dating now too and I’m pretty sure he has no earthly clue.”

“We are not,” Tsuyu said shyly. “I still have to ask him.”

“And if he screws up this time, I’m putting him in the ground for you,” Ochako reminded her, bringing her friend’s hands up so she could press a loud kiss to her knuckles. “Just say the word. Bakugou would help me in a heartbeat, no one would find his body.”

“Please wait until I am out of the room to plan a murder!” Aoyoma whined. “*Déni plausible, et tout.*”

Tsuyu smiled wryly at the two, tapping both of their noses with her fingers. “No need for that,” she said, “besides, we’re not here for me. Ochako, you just have to remember one thing, okay?”

“And what’s that,” Ochako said with a laugh. That laughter died when Tsuyu gently caught Ochako’s chin in her hands, looking her straight in the eyes with a seriousness that made Ochako feel like there was a weight in her stomach.

“No matter what, Bakugou loves you,” she said. “Whether he is *in love* with you is something you will have to ask him yourself, preferably sooner rather than later, but he *loves you*. You two are partners and best friends, I have watched him literally level buildings for you. He would never intentionally hurt you, and you two love each other too much to let drama pull you apart.”

Ochako felt breathless and dizzy, only Tsuyu and Aoyoma’s touch kept her tethered to the ground. Deep down, Ochako knew Tsuyu was right. She would have to talk about her feelings with Bakugou and *soon*, with graduation looming over like an axe ready to drop, but at the end of the day she would love him no matter what. If he rejected

her it would be quick and painless, with that gentle sort of firmness Bakugou reserved for his friends, and then... nothing would change. He wouldn't walk on eggshells around her, he wouldn't handle her like something fragile. He would trust her to know her own boundaries, to tell him what new lines she needed in order to recover, and when her heart had mended, he would be there waiting for her.

She would still have him, and wasn't that really all she needed?

(It wasn't all she *wanted*, but that was a separate issue.)

Ochako sighed, feeling the last of her tension leaving her shoulders. "You're right," she admitted, and Tsuyu smiled.

"Eighty percent of the time, *kero*. Now, what are we going to do?"

"Remember that Bakugou loves me?"

"Aaand?"

Ochako pouted. "You're coming back to the '*this is a question you should ask Bakugou*' thing, aren't you?"

"Yes. Yes, I am."

"Normally I would decry the lack of romance and drama, but it really is high time you two sit down and talk this out," Aoyoma said from over her shoulder. "I'm getting dizzy watching you two circling each other."

"A good heart-to-heart can be very romantic, *thank you*," Tsuyu defended. "Especially ever since Bakugou learned how to speak like a normal human being after Ochako rehabilitated him."

"Please stop talking about my partner like he's a rescue dog," Ochako said with a laugh.

"Come on, you have to admit he acts a little feral sometimes. And by sometimes I mean often," Tsuyu said, and Ochako whacked her shoulder with the back of her hand.

"He just feels things very intensely!" she defended. "I think it's amazing how he throws all of himself into the things he cares about."

"I believe this is what Kaminari would call a '*Title of Your Sextape*' moment," Aoyoma mused, and Tsuyu burst out laughing as Ochako turned a bright red and tried to wiggle out of Aoyoma's arm with a

wordless shriek of embarrassment.

Mid-commotion, there was a knock at the door, and all three froze and looked up as Momo poked her head inside. Her eyes landed on Ochako and she visibly relaxed. "Oh thank goodness," she sighed, "there you are."

"Is *everyone* freaking out because I left the room for a few minutes?" Ochako whined in exasperation, her head falling back between her shoulders. Aoyama and Tsuyu unabashedly giggled at her misery. Jerks.

"No, it's not that," Momo explained from the doorway, looking back over her shoulder and saying something to someone out of sight before turning back. "We have a Bombsquad situation."

Well, *that* got Ochako to her feet.

She quickly crossed to the door, Tsuyu and Aoyoma trailing after her. "I was gone for *fifteen minutes*," Ochako said, worry wrinkling her brow. "What could have possibly happened?"

Momo moved to let them out, and Ochako spotted Iida also waiting by the door, although he was very pointedly not peeking into the women's restroom.

"We weren't there when it started," Iida explained as they all began to cross the ballroom. Ochako couldn't hear any screaming or explosions, which was a good sign, but Momo wouldn't have come searching for her to wrangle her partner if everything was going *right*. "We just know that he's drawn a crowd."

"*Sacré bleu,*" Aoyoma huffed.

"Where's Midoriya and Kirishima?" Tsuyu asked.

"We went and got them first when we couldn't spot Uraraka."

"And?"

"Midoriya joined him and Kirishima is cheering them on while Todoroki records everything."

Under her breath, Ochako muttered some choice words that would have made her mother gasp. Momo led them right towards a crowd in the center of the ballroom, pro-heroes and civilians alike gathered

around the spectacle that had drawn them in. Ochako could hear Bakugou and Deku's familiar voices now, talking fast and passionate, and her stomach dropped.

If they were working together at *that* speed, it *had* to be bad.

She found All Might first by sheer virtue of him being one of the tallest in the crowd, and led the push of the other students to get to the front by their teacher to see what exactly was going on. What she found managed to stop her in her tracks.

Bakugou and Deku were side by side, Bakugou's shoulders and neck tense with anger and his arms crossed in front of his puffed chest in a show of intimidation that made even Ochako falter. Deku, by comparison, was bent over his phone; fingers flying over the screen and not even looking up every time he chimed in with a new number or statistic. Across from them, a man in a suit with a neglected flute of champagne in his hand was looking like he couldn't decide if he was furious or horrifically embarrassed. Either way, he looked like he wanted to be struck down where he stood rather than being lectured by two teenagers for any longer.

A few steps behind him, Ochako spotted Endeavor watching the whole encounter with an expression she knew far too well from befriending his son. His features were a mask, no hint of a smile pressed against his own wine glass, but his eyes were alight with wicked delight.

Seeing Endeavor made Ochako realize that the man she didn't know was one of his sidekicks; a hero called Melt Down who possessed a Quirk that allowed him to superheat any part of his body to a degree that rivaled even Endeavor's flames. He could melt through solid steel in mere moments, and Ochako had seen him on a few occasions when she'd gone to visit Todoroki or Deku at their internships, or when she and Bakugou represented Mirko in a joint mission with Endeavor's agency.

But still, none of that explained why Bakugou and Deku were hurling... were those *rescue hero statistics* they were rattling off?

"What in the... ?"

All Might looked down and noticed her for the first time, gaunt cheeks pulling up into a welcoming grin. "Oh, hello Young Uraraka," he said warmly. "There you are. How are you enjoying the evening?"

"I'm... fine," Ochako said slowly, watching the spectacle in front of

her with furrowed eyebrows. “What’s going on?” she asked. When she looked back up at her teacher, his expression could only be described as exasperated.

“I’m not entirely sure,” he admitted. “I heard Young Bakugou’s first outburst and came over to help, but by then he’d already drawn a crowd and I wasn’t able to get a word in. I had hoped Young Midoriya might have been able to stop him, but... well-”

“Look at me when I’m *fucking* talking to you, extra,” Bakugou growled, snapping his fingers at Melt Down; who had been looking at the ceiling as if to ask for mercy. His head snapped down.

“You can’t talk to me like-”

“Then next time don’t talk shit and we won’t have to,” Deku said calmly, almost kindly, without looking up from his phone. On the other side of the gathered crowd, Kirishima hooted with laughter as he punched the air, Todoroki smiling behind his phone as he recorded the whole thing. “Now, where was I?”

“2031 study of Rescue Hero stats versus Combat Hero stats,” Bakugou said without taking his eyes off the sidekick. “Comparing yearly amounts of property damage attributed to both.”

“Right! Paragraph C?”

“We were on E, dipshit.”

“Perfect.”

“It’s nice to see them working together off the battlefield,” All Might said fondly. On his other side, Aizawa looked like he was trying to pinch a migraine out of existence via the bridge of his nose. Ochako was inclined to side with the latter. At least it looked like the crowd was siding with the two younger heroes, with several reporters grinning and taking pictures and other pros watching curiously. Mirko, standing next to a laughing Fatgum, looked absolutely *delighted* to see one of her own sidekicks ripping into the other.

Clearly no one else wanted to stop them.

“You get your boy, I get mine?” Tsuyu murmured from Ochako’s side, smoothing down her silvery dress before glancing at her for instruction. Ochako nodded.

“Let me get their attention first,” she said. She took a deep breath before stepping into the space the crowd had left cleared around the four heroes, and it took her almost no time at all to reach Bakugou’s side. Her hand found the small of his back, pinky up, and he went tense for half a second before relaxing into her touch. Ochako easily slotted herself against his side with her hands tucked against his elbow.

“Good evening, gentlemen,” she said sweetly, giving Endeavor and Melt Down a small smile. “I hope I’m not interrupting something important.” Melt Down’s face was rapidly turning a dangerous shade of purple at the sight of her, but she had been partners with Bakugou for far too long to let this extra intimidate her.

“Not in the slightest,” Bakugou snarled, his eyes staying on Melt Down for a few moments more as if daring him to say anything else before looking back down at her. The tension in his features immediately dissipated at the sight of her, and she gave him a reassuring smile. “You good, Cheeks?” he asked quietly.

“I come back to find you having a debate club meeting in the middle of the ballroom and you’re asking how *I* am?” she asked just as quietly, voice tinged with amusement. “I’ve got questions.”

“Later,” he promised. They both looked up to see Tsuyu quietly leading Midoriya away by the hand, the other hero still rambling about statistics even as he easily followed the much smaller hero out. The rest of the crowd seemed to understand that the show was coming to an end and began to file away, with an irritated Iida already lecturing Kirishima and Todoroki as they walked away. Ochako turned her attention back to the two men who remained.

“Endeavor, sir, always a pleasure,” she said with a smile, and the older hero nodded to her.

She turned her attention to Melt Down, her expression one of polite confusion. “I don’t think we’ve been introduced yet,” she said innocently. His nostrils seemed to flare in irritation. They both knew they’d met several times before, but hey, he had pissed off *her* boy. The least she could do was imply he was forgettable at best.

(Okay, so yes, maybe some of Bakugou’s pettiness had rubbed off on her over the years. She liked to think it was just another reason why they worked; she helped him to become more empathetic, he helped her to become more of a bitch. It evened them out.)

“He’s one of Endeavor’s sidekicks,” Bakugou said, and she could practically *feel* how delighted he was by her attitude. “Microwave or something.”

“It’s Melt Down,” he grit out. Ochako looked him up and down.

“Appropriate,” she mused. Ignoring his angry huffing, Ochako looked back at Endeavor and patted Bakugou’s chest. “So sorry to cut this conversation short, but this one promised me a dance and if I don’t collect now, he’ll keep finding a way out of it,” she joked. “Do you mind?”

Endeavor gestured with his wine glass out towards the dance floor. “Not at all.”

“Wonderful! Sir, I look forward to seeing you at the next rankings announcement,” Ochako said, taking one hand off Bakugou’s arm to offer it to Endeavor. He shook it with a small, amused curl on his lips.

“Same to you, Uravity,” he replied. Ochako gave him her most winning smile before swinging her attention to Melt Down. Her smile dropped and she wrapped Bakugou’s attitude around her like a cape as she looked down her nose at the taller man, making him squirm in place. She didn’t offer him her hand.

“I don’t think we’ll have to be too worried about you,” she said easily, one eyebrow quirked high on her forehead. His lips pressed into an angry little line as Bakugou barely bit back a snort, and Ochako smirked. “Enjoy your evening.”

She led Bakugou away by the arm, not fighting him when he twisted back and gave the sidekick a mocking salute. They made their way to the center of the dance floor, and Ochako had every intention of walking straight through and finding a stairwell or balcony to talk to her partner in private. Instead, a familiar hand wrapped around her waist and spun her back towards Bakugou with a yelp, the two standing chest to chest. Bakugou’s grin was the definition of ‘*cat that caught the canary*’, and Ochako found herself blushing under his heated stare.

“I’ve mentioned before that you’re brilliant, right?” Bakugou murmured as he smoothed his hand against the bare skin over her spine, his other hand catching hers and holding it tightly. Now her face was *really* on fire, but she smiled back as she placed her free hand on his shoulder.

“You could stand to mention it more,” she teased, and his laugh rumbled through them both. Without any outside cue, the two began to sway back and forth in time with the music from the live band near the wall. It wasn’t the first time they’d danced together; that had been back in second year, when Ochako had goaded him for three weeks straight until he finally acquiesced just to shut her up. She’d insisted it was good for their partnership, helping them to practice moving together and finding each other’s tells, and when she’d turned it into a challenge, he had attacked the task with all his usual aplomb.

Now it was almost second nature to settle into the frame of his body, following his lead even in this lazy sway.

“Took you, what, ten words to do what I’d been trying to do for ten minutes?” Bakugou said incredulously, and Ochako giggled.
“Should’ve called you over first, Deku was zero fucking help.”

“What did he even say to set you off?” she asked. His smile twisted into a grimace, and anger flashed behind his eyes. Ochako squeezed his hand in reassurance, and Bakugou let out a long breath.

“It’s stupid.”

“Not if it upset you, it’s not.”

That managed to make him chuckle, and Bakugou shook his head.
“You’ve met me, right?”

“Once or twice, I think. Quit stalling.”

Bakugou huffed, and with how close they were, it managed to blow her bangs into her eyes. “I was talkin’ with Icy-Hot and his old man when that dumbshit sidekick joined the conversation. Endeavor brought up plans for after graduation and when I brought you up, Melt Down...” A sound like a growl rumbled through his chest, and Ochako’s hand slipped from his shoulder to press against his breastbone; centering him again. Bakugou’s grip on her waist tightened. “He said ‘*If you ever get sick of babysitting rescue heroes, we’ve got a spot open for you.*’”

Ochako’s jaw dropped, her eyebrows shooting up. “He said that?” she gasped, and Bakugou was snarling again.

“Disrespectful *shitheel*. Would have punched him out if we were literally *anywhere else*.”

“What did Endeavor say?” It was a well-known secret that Bakugou had walked from his year-long work study with the Endeavor agency after he’d denied Ochako’s application - a move she’d berated him for plenty already - but since they started working together under Mirko, they’d worked with Endeavor quite a few times. Whatever ill will she had towards the pro-hero had melted away when they’d seen firsthand how incompatible their style of partnership would have been with the way Endeavor’s massive agency operated compared to Mirko’s much smaller group of heroes. He’d even offered them critiques a few times after joint raids.

Bakugou still held a grudge, but Ochako was fairly sure he was capable of holding onto his anger until the literal sun burnt out.

“Just took a long pull of his wine, said ‘*Good lord*’ , and stepped back so I could show his dumbass lackey his own asshole,” Bakugou said, and Ochako snorted in delight. “Old fart gets points for that.”

“How generous of you.”

“He’s lucky he’s getting his employee back with all his *teeth*. ”

With only a squeeze of her hand as a warning, Bakugou spun her under his arm before pulling her back against him and beginning to make their way across the floor. Ochako easily followed his lead, entranced by the way the skirt of her dress spun and moved around her and the gentle pressure of Bakugou’s hand on her back. It was like being on the battlefield with him, every movement perfectly in sync as they pushed and pulled at each other like binary stars.

She never wanted this to end, she realized, her conversation with Tsuyu and Aoyoma weighing heavy on her mind.

She had to say something.

“Would you?” she blurted out, and Bakugou’s eyebrows furrowed as he spun them to a slow halt. They were swaying again, closer to the windows now, where the burbling of the fountain in the garden outside shielded them from eavesdroppers.

“Would I what?” he asked.

“Go back to Endeavor’s agency,” Ochako clarified. “If we weren’t working together.”

“Why wouldn’t we be working together?”

Bakugou looked genuinely confused, and Ochako's heart gave a heavy lurch in her chest. "I dunno," she murmured, focusing on his chest when she could no longer meet his eyes. "It's not like we've talked in any detail about what happens after graduation."

His grip on her got tighter.

"Because we were waiting to see what kind of offers came in after the Gala," Bakugou said slowly, "not because- do you not want to be partners after we graduate?"

"No!" Ochako blurted out. "I mean- yes, I want us to be partners. I just... I wasn't sure if *you* wanted to." The confusion was gone from his face now, replaced with incredulous frustration.

"In what fucking galaxy do I act like I don't want our partnership to continue!?" he growled. Ochako burned under the intensity of his red eyes, unable to look away.

"You never said-"

"I didn't think I fucking had to-"

"For me, you do!" she hissed, grip on his jacket going tight. Bakugou went quiet as his wide eyes watched her. "For me, you have to say it," she repeated, quieter this time. "I can't just... assume. I've... I've been wrong before, and with this- with *us*, I can't." She sighed shakily, pressing her forehead to his shoulder. "This matters too much."

They had stopped swaying, the two heroes-in-training instead standing still in place as other couples spun around them. They felt hundreds of miles away, though; there was just Bakugou, Ochako, and the rise and fall of his chest.

"Ochako."

Sparks danced along her spine at his murmur of her given name, her head snapping up and immediately recoiling shyly when she found his own face much closer than she had expected. There was that look in his eyes again, that soft exasperation that made her heart turn gooey and liquid in her chest.

"I'm in this for the long haul," Bakugou said quietly, and the world held its breath. "I have been for a year at the *least*. Would I have dragged this out for so long if I didn't think it was going somewhere? If I didn't think that this was something *good*?"

Ochako didn't know how to respond. Couldn't string the words together to form a reply. Because she knew he wouldn't have; he wouldn't have wasted his precious time. Tsu's words from before came back to her.

"Because when people look back on the start of Dynamight's official career, for the rest of your lives, they're going to see you right there next to him. He's never going to be just Dynamight."

Ochako shook her head shyly. Bakugou looked like he couldn't decide if he wanted to smack her upside the head or pull her into a hug. Their joined hands, which had fallen to hang loose at their sides when they'd stopped dancing, went loose before he twined their fingers together. Ochako could have fainted right there and then.

"You know I'm not good at words, Cheeks," he murmured, and she pouted at him.

"*Bullshit*, you suave motherfucker," she grumbled. Bakugou laughed under his breath, knocking his chin gently against her temple.

"You know what I mean." She really did; he hated these '*Feelings Talks*', hated how raw and exposed they made him feel. That he was even doing this right now for her, in the middle of the most important night of their lives, said more than words ever could. More and more recently, it felt like the line was blurring between the person Bakugou was when they in a crowd and when they were alone.

She owed him to be honest and upfront. Maybe not with *everything*, not now, but...

"What happened to being number one?" Ochako asked softly. "Pairs have never even broken into the top ten."

Bakugou's response was a grin that made her feel electrified from her head to her toes. "Yet. They haven't broken the top ten yet," he amended. "Imagine how satisfying it'll be when we're the first."

"And if we don't?"

"Then who gives a shit?" Bakugou snorted a laugh at how fast Ochako's jaw dropped at his blasé response. "It's a popularity contest, Cheeks. The last three years have proven that time and time again. I want to be the *best*, and I am. With you. That's what matters."

Ochako felt worryingly close to tears, her smile wide and shaky on her

lips. “Yeah?” she breathed, and Bakugou grinned back.

“You know we are. If we don’t make the top ten it’s because we broke the damn scale in the first place.”

She laughed as tears finally broke past the barrier of her lashes, streaking down her cheeks faster than she could wipe them away. All of the fear and insecurity from the night, all of it gone with a few simple words from this impossibly wonderful boy. Not twenty minutes ago, she had been so confused about what they were, where they were going, and now she could see a whole future for them spread out before her. This friendship they shared wouldn’t end when they graduated, not now that they were on the same page and - as Bakugou said - in it for the long-haul. She felt weightless and nearly dizzy in relief.

Oh. Wait. No- her feet were *actually* off the floor. She had activated her Quirk on herself while wiping her tears.

Bakugou’s hands on her hips were the only thing keeping her from floating to the ceiling, his body shaking with his laughter, and Ochako found herself giggling with him. “Oh geez,” she said breathlessly, going to press her fingers together and let herself back down to solid ground.

Except Bakugou’s hands found hers first, twining their fingers together and pulling her hands away so she was floating with only his hands as anchors. “I- what? Let me down!”

“Nah,” Bakugou drawled, sending her spinning in a slow circle under his arm as she floated weightlessly. Her lack of gravity bled into her hair and dress, and they moved with her like she was underwater. “My neck needs a break from looking down at you if we’re gonna keep talking about mushy shit.”

“*Katsuki!*” Ochako whined with a laugh, curling herself up shyly as she felt more and more people looked over at them curiously. Bakugou didn’t seem to give a shit about the audience they had attracted; in fact, he wasn’t looking at anything but her, his mouth agape with shock. That look was back in his eyes, the one that made her heart try to leap out of her chest and into his hands, and she dared to hope for a moment that it was adoration she saw there. It made her lose her breath.

He tugged her back towards him easily, a large, crooked grin on his lips as their chests pressed against each other. “Am I Katsuki now?” he

purred, and Ochako flushed a bright red.

“You called me Ochako first,” she fired back. His grin got wider.

“You didn’t kill me for it.”

“Be pretty silly of me to kill you after we just had a heart-to-heart about wanting to make our partnership a permanent thing,” she said with a smile of her own. He nodded.

“Fair point. Though what do you mean ‘wanting’?”

Ochako spun herself around him easily, giggling as she used his shoulders as an anchor. “We haven’t technically agreed to anything yet,” she teased against his ear, and Bakugou caught her by the waist with a growl. She laughed brightly as he pulled her the rest of the way around him until they were face to face, Ochako’s feet still several inches off the ground as their foreheads pressed together.

“You gonna be difficult about this or do we get to end the night with an official announcement, Ochako?” Bakugou asked, and his use of her name again made her shiver. She was still giggling helplessly, her knees tucked against his side as her hands rested on his shoulders, and she was sure that their picture had already been taken a dozen times. She was sure, in the morning, social media would be blowing up with images of their weightless dancing; of Ochako with tears in her eyes and a smile on her lips, and of Katsuki, her anchor, leading her with practiced ease.

But right now, there was just him, her, and the rest of their lives. She still wasn’t sure if this was a date or not, but she did know that no matter what, he loved her. That wasn’t nothing, no matter if it was platonic or more.

“You and me, hero,” Ochako murmured, smiling wide at the man she loved. “Let’s make some history.”

Katsuki grinned, wide and triumphant and beautiful. “That’s my girl,” he said proudly, and in a matter of heartbeats, the two were spinning around the room again; Ochako floating and twirling high above the rest of the Gala with only Katsuki’s hand to keep her anchored.

And that was enough. It was more than enough.

Chapter End Notes

A huge shout out to Kim for betaing this chapter and making sure it was legible! I am running on v little sleep rn so the fact that this is coherent at all is, frankly, a miracle. You're an angel~

Thank you all so much for your patience while I got this chapter up and together! We're in the homestretch now, just one more chapter after this! (I'm not making any promises as to when it will be done, I have learned my lesson.) The last chapter will be in Bakugou's POV!

As for what happens after this? Well~ Let's just say plans are in place.

Thank you all for the love, and I hope this chapter lives up to the hype!

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

This was supposed to be the last chapter of the fic. It is not lol.

I stalled out for so long trying to figure out a smooth way to transition the scene in a way that fit in with the rest of the fic, and I just could NOT figure it out. So this chapter got split in two and now the total number of chapters in this fic is seven, whoops lol

A big shout-out to all my friends who supported me as I wrote this, especially Amii and Kate who made it absolutely clear they would steal my toes if I didn't finish this fic lol.

The announcement that Uravity and Dynamight would be continuing their partnership in an official capacity as pros broke the goddamn internet. Not that they hadn't already done that a few times.

Mina was the one to spam Katsuki's phone with messages at three AM after they'd returned to the dorms following the Gala. Apparently the tag '*Dynavity*' was trending on Twitter, along with a few other Gala-related tags, and the app was full of images of the two from the evening.

Ochako and Katsuki getting out of the limo. Ochako and Katsuki posing on the red carpet. Ochako and Katsuki schmoozing together with the pros. Ochako and Katsuki tearing Metacarpal or *Whom-the-fuck-ever* a new asshole.

Ochako and Katsuki dancing; his partner spinning weightlessly in the air in her maroon and gold dress, frozen mid-laugh on his screen as he looked at her with that dumb, besotted expression he was becoming increasingly familiar with.

Katsuki texted Mina back, telling her to go the fuck to sleep already. He saved the best picture of them dancing together and set it as his home screen.

(The previous image had been the two of them dirty and bloody and in full uniform, sitting together on some rubble and grinning at the camera while Ochako did some cutesy pose that didn't at all match with the long, gushing trails of blood going down her face from her broken nose. Ochako had thought it was weird and gory, and Katsuki

had reminded her she'd banned him from using the screenshot from their third Sports Festival of the exact moment Ochako roundhouse-kicked Deku into the auditorium seats by the jaw.

To this day, that screenshot was the only thing that dulled his annoyance that the doubles fight in the last round had gone on that long. That they hadn't been proclaimed the winners the *moment* Ochako had lifted the entire fighting platform twenty feet into the air and made them duke it out on a level from Super Smash Bros was still, to date, one of the most *batshit insulting* things Katsuki had ever experienced.)

By breakfast, most of the hero gossip sites had named them the Best Couple at the Gala. By lunch, the video of Katsuki and Deku verbally beating Melting Pot or *whoever* into submission and Ochako's flawless finishing move had played on nearly every news outlet they'd flipped through on the common room tv; sparking debates all over the place.

By dinner, the article of the brief interview they'd done at the end of the night with one of Mirko's trusted reporter friends -- the one announcing their intentions to continue their partnership officially after graduation, making them the first established duo to come out of UA in almost twenty-five years -- was published online and Katsuki had to turn his phone off and stash it in a utensils drawer to keep the notifications from driving him nuts.

He couldn't mute and shove his *classmates* in drawers, unfortunately, but luckily most of them were so distracted by their own evenings that the teasing Katsuki and Ochako received was minimal. Hell, most of them looked more relieved than anything.

Ochako smiled all day, giggling in excitement every time their eyes met, and Katsuki had nearly thrown himself out of multiple windows because his heart had crashed out somewhere in his chest and he'd had no fucking idea what to do about it.

Something had *changed* between them the night of the Gala; some piece that had been just a bit off-center finally slotting into place. He didn't know what it was, didn't even know if it had really changed anything, but for the first time since he and Ochako had started this whole partnership, it felt like he could see the top of the rollercoaster. That explosion he'd been caught in the beginning of for almost two years had a timer now, and he found himself looking forward to the detonation.

With Ochako's words -- her bright, teary smile, face held close to his as she whispered "*You and me, hero*" -- she had sent dozens of wheels and cogs into motion, and now he was just letting her take him along for the ride.

When they weren't cramming for finals, they were looking at agencies together. When they weren't training, they were perfecting their resumes and talking with agents. Things they'd been doing *around* each other for months became team activities, and Katsuki found himself eagerly looking forward to even the most mundane and obnoxious parts of professional heroism.

One night after finishing an essay for their English course, the two had spent hours lounging on her bed with his tablet between them, scrolling through different apartment listings near some of the agencies they were talking with. They didn't talk about the fact that all the apartments they talked about had two bedrooms, or that the ones they liked the most were ones with big kitchens and large balconies. Ochako had joked about coming to visit him in his fancy apartment building from whatever studio she found, even as he made sure the apartments he liked were pet-friendly (Ochako had gone on and on about wanting a cat after graduation).

It wasn't until later that night, alone in his room, Katsuki remembered Ochako's confession from the Gala. Her genuine confusion when Katsuki had said he'd always intended to stay her partner after graduation, the way her hand had fisted in his jacket as she whispered "*For me, you have to say it*".

Katsuki was at her door two minutes later, knocking until Mina yelled at him and Ochako finally opened the door. "I want us to live together," he'd said, firm and direct. "I want to be roommates. Just wanted to make sure that was clear."

Ochako, blinking sleep out of her eyes, had laughed and smiled in relief, nodding. "Me too." Her hand had found his, her cool touch smothering the beginning embers of his embarrassment. "I'd love that." The unfiltered relief and joy shining in those brown eyes he loved so much made every part of him warm and impossibly full.

(In some distant corner of his mind, the thought '*How much is she holding back due to uncertainty?*' began to grow; taking shape and turning into something almost like hope.)

They'd always understood each other, but it seemed like now they

were communicating on a level they had never reached before. It showed in all aspects of their life, even in training.

Their finals had been the day before, and Katsuki was still aching and sore and *wired*. They wouldn't have the results until the end of the week on their last day, so until then they were basically free to work on whatever they wanted to. Perfecting more advanced techniques, throwing new ones at the wall while they had the space to experiment and get immediate feedback. Katsuki was working on moving in zero-g, Ochako as his fulcrum and home base as he shot off of the walls of the cityscape in Ground Beta. They were paired off against Four-Eyes, trying to break past his lightning-fast defense while he did everything in his power to keep them confined.

It was one of the things he loved most about working with Ochako. When she was focused, it was easy to believe there wasn't anything they couldn't do together. She caught his outstretched hand with ease no matter where he came at her from, spinning him around and releasing him with devastating accuracy, not flinching from the proximity of his explosions. Her feet hovered just above the ground, her own gravity lessened so she could move faster, and from the outside, the two of them looked like they were dancing. It was like they were back at the night of the Gala, only now Katsuki was the one moving weightlessly through the air, and Ochako was the one keeping him on the ground.

Somehow, her gym pants and cut up tshirt were just as devastating to his nerves as the designer dress she'd wore that night, and he figured it had everything to do with the fire and confidence in her eyes.

They'd been doing the exercise with Iida for about fifteen minutes and Katsuki had managed to work up a thick layer of sweat when he made a mistake. He could feel it from the second his feet had kicked off from the wall, heading towards Iida, that the angle was wrong. It wasn't an uncommon occurrence; they were moving at speeds where one wrong movement in one split second could send him careening face-first into the ground instead of into the air, and it was expected that they'd make the occasional error. It didn't stop the familiar feeling of frustration and inadequacy, but he knew voicing that thought would just get him whacked over the head by half his graduating class, so he kept his growl of frustration to himself and focused on getting out of this mistake with minimal damage.

Except he wasn't flying towards Ochako's protective embrace. No, Katsuki was approaching the Human Transformer at an angle that left

him completely defenseless at speeds that would see him face to face with the dweeb within half a second.

Katsuki braced for the impact and cussed in his own mind as he got within range, and like clockwork he felt Iida's sneaker meet his chest with bonecrushing accuracy.

His breath physically kicked the *fuck* out of him, Katsuki could only gasp as his trajectory was immediately and violently rewritten; shooting back into the air away from Four-Eyes at an angle that shot him far above Ochako's reach. Too high and fast for any of the other students or teachers to catch him. Katsuki resigned himself to spending the night in the infirmary after colliding with a concrete building at a speed of roughly *oh-fuck* -miles-per-hour, too busy with the lack of oxygen making his head spin to catch himself with an explosion, when the world came to an abrupt and dizzying stop.

Katsuki hung in the air for several moments, wheezing as he tried to catch his breath, before he could take stock of the world around him. The fact that he wasn't smeared against a wall in agony meant it wasn't the wall that stopped him, but neither could he feel Sero's tape or Aizawa's capture weapon. Hell, even the familiar feeling of Deku's Black Whip was absent. Katsuki was just... frozen. Hanging weightlessly in midair with only a twist in the back of his stomach indicating he was held in place at all. He moved cautiously, relieved to find everything still functional and mobile, and found the building he'd been about to careen into less than an arm's length away.

He reached out carefully, steadying himself before looking down at himself to find who had caught him. Nothing. No arcs of black energy or tightly-wound lengths of thick tape or - thank god - freakishly flexible and long tongues wrapped around him. Katsuki, for the life of him, could not figure out what had stopped him.

Not until he heard All Might's distant "*Holy shit*" and turned to look back down at the ground.

He wasn't so high that he couldn't make out the figures below him, and almost instinctively, his eyes searched for Ochako's familiar form. When he found her, his breath left him once again in a whoosh, leaving him gaping and breathless.

Ochako's face was twisted in determination and concentration, her teeth bared in a familiar snarl and tendrils of loose, sweaty curls that had fallen out of her ponytail waving weightlessly around her flushed

cheeks. Her feet had dropped to the ground so hard she was kneeling, one hand braced in front of her. Her other hand had clenched into a tight fist, and her outstretched and shaking arm was pointing directly at him.

“No fucking way,” Katsuki breathed just as Kirishima began to whoop and scream from where he had been practicing, jumping up and down as All Might pushed both hands through his bangs and out of his incredulous face.

Iida and Aizawa were the closest to Ochako, and Aizawa was already kneeling next to her; speaking in low rapid tones that Katsuki couldn’t hope to catch from this height. Iida looked caught somewhere between concern and shock, and Katsuki could only mirror him.

Had... Had *Ochako* stopped him!?

“Holy crap,” Deku breathed as he came up to float beside Katsuki, eyes bright in that way they were when he was breaking down some new, fascinating Quirk. “Holy crap, Kacchan!”

“Did she-” he breathed, pointing down at Ochako with the hand that wasn’t braced against the building.

“I think so!” Deku didn’t dare come too close, almost like he was afraid to break whatever hold Ochako had on his friend. “I just heard Iida yell and then she screamed and then-! *Kacchan!*”

“I know.”

“Holy shit! ”

“ I know.”

“What does it feel like?” he asked eagerly as Dark Shadow came up beside them, hovering close and chirping curiously.

“Sensei wants to know if you’re alright,” they asked in that weird, ghostly rasp that Katsuki still wasn’t used to. They didn’t touch him either, staying out of his personal space like they too were afraid to break the moment.

“I’m fine,” Katsuki responded, a little dazed. “Uh, a little breathless from getting Sparta-kicked in the fucking chest, but fine. Um. It feels like... there’s a tether? Right below and behind my navel, almost?” As he spoke, he lurched forward a foot, and the students below all

cheered. “Is she *pulling me in!?*”

“She was supposed to wait for my all clear,” Dark Shadow hummed, “but it can’t be helped. I’ll let them know you’re alright. Deku, Sensei says to stay with Dynamight in case Uravity loses her grip, but don’t interfere.” Katsuki didn’t bother trying to correct them on his hero name; he’d resigned himself to everyone abbreviating it somewhere around second year.

“She’s latched onto your center of gravity,” Deku said breathlessly, completely oblivious to Dark Shadow’s presence. “Her Quirk was active on you at the time and she *changed it without touching you again!*”

“We’ll be fine,” Katsuki told Dark Shadow, who chirped and nuzzled his shoulder before swooping back towards the ground and to their host. Kirishima was practically running laps at this point, going in excited circles while Todoroki was surprisingly bouncing in place, eyes shining. The whole class was in chaos, all keeping a respectful distance from the straining heroine at their center, but their excitement could be felt from even Katsuki’s height.

“I know she’s been working on orbiting things around her own center of gravity, but she usually has to touch the objects first and dial their gravity back slowly. To do it on a moving object and so quickly is remarkable,” Deku was muttering now, even as Katsuki felt himself being drawn down towards his partner in short lurches.

“She really is,” he breathed, looking down at Ochako and feeling the explosion go off somewhere in the cavity of his chest.

It was slow work, bringing him down, and far from smooth. Sometimes he’d only move an inch or two, and sometimes there would be a tug so rough it felt like he was being yanked through the air by his spine. But never did that invisible tether falter or loosen its grip on him; sure and strong despite the multiple laws of nature they were flaunting. With each tug, he got a little closer to the ground, a little closer to the axis he was tied to. To who he could now unshakingly say was the center of his universe because *she had made it a literal statement.*

Deku was still muttering about the applications this new technique would have in rescue and combat alike when Katsuki blurted out, “Holy fuck I love her.” Deku’s head snapped up, staring at Katsuki with wide, green eyes, and he could only laugh. “Izuku, I fucking love

her,” he repeated, smiling wide in wonder and awe.

How could he not!? How could he look at this girl who bent the actual laws of the universe around her with dancing fingertips and not want to scream his love for her out into the world at the top of his lungs? In that moment, it felt like the most simple, inevitable thing in the world. The explosion had come and now there was nothing holding him back, for better or worse. He’d launched himself into the air and now all he could do was fall and see if Ochako would catch him.

Again.

Katsuki laughed, throwing his head back, and when he looked back at Deku the other boy had tears in his eyes and a huge, wobbling smile on his face. “Yeah,” he blubbered, nodding his head as he tried to wipe his eyes. “C-can I be a groomsman at your wedding?”

“Only if Ochako doesn’t claim you as a bridesmaid first,” Katsuki said with a grin, and Deku looped happily in the air, going to hug Katsuki and coming to a halt when nearly twenty voices from below screamed out, “*DON’T!*”

“RIGHT! SORRY!” he called down, backing away from Katsuki as the blond cackled. There was another lurch, and he looked down at Ochako with a wide, curling grin. He was close enough now to see the way her knuckles had gone white. She had shifted into a more comfortable position, and behind the concentration that still pulled at all of her soft features, Katsuki could see the elation and excitement just waiting to bubble up.

She had never looked more beautiful.

He was going to kiss the *hell* out of her when his feet touched the ground.

It took another couple of minutes or so to get Katsuki close enough to the ground that he could start to pick out individual voices. Aizawa’s was still too low to catch his words as the hero coached Ochako through bringing Katsuki down safely, but now Katsuki could make out the grin on his face, halfway normal instead of his teeth-bared horror movie smile, and prouder than he had ever seen the man. Denki and Hagakure had both dropped to the ground like WWE referees, cheering Ochako on as they beat their fists excitedly against the street. Yaomomo and Mina had joined Kirishima in his cheering and jumping around, Yaomomo flapping her hands excitedly as she tried to contain herself.

Kyouka was sitting crosslegged on the ground opposite Denki and Hagakure, one jack pointed at Ochako - probably monitoring her vitals to make sure she wasn't overclocking her Quirk - and one pointed up towards him. Judging by the huge, smug grin on her face, she had heard his confession earlier to Deku, but Katsuki really did not care. Not when Ochako was getting rapidly closer.

"Come on, Cheeks," he called out, grinning. "Just a little further. Then I can kick your ass for not telling me you could do this sooner." Ochako, drenched in sweat, smirked at him. His heart happily took a swandive out of his chest to land in front of her on the ground.

"Would've done it sooner," she bit out, voice strained, "if I had known."

"Focus, Uraraka," Aizawa said. He shot Katsuki a frown. "Don't distract her."

"She can handle it," Katsuki said with a laugh. Ochako's answering smile lit him up like a firework.

"Nearly there, Young Uraraka," All Might cheered. "Just a few more feet and you can let go!"

"You can do it, Ochako," Tsu encouraged. "Almost there."

"Just a little closer, angel," Katsuki said, barely loud enough for himself to hear. "Just a little more."

Closing her eyes and growling low, Ochako twisted the hand she'd been "holding" him with and yanked it down to her hip, pulling him the last few feet forward until his boots hit the ground awkwardly. His gravity returned a moment later when she tapped her fingers together, hissing a quiet "*Release*" that Katsuki saw more than heard. Given that the entire class had burst into cheering and screams.

Katsuki understood the feeling-- hell, he wanted to scream and whoop and cheer right alongside them. But before he was even properly settled on his feet again, Ochako was stumbling over the dozen or so feet between them, rushing forward with a call of his name. Katsuki braced himself just in time to catch his partner in his arms, holding her tight against his bruised chest as she scrambled to wrap herself around him.

"Katsuki! Are you okay!?" she asked frantically, seemingly oblivious to the commotion happening around them. Just like the first time at

the Gala, his heart crashed into overdrive and shivers raced under his skin at the way her lips wrapped around his given name, and his hold on her tightened. “I saw Tenya kick you and you just went *flying* and you weren’t responding and I was so scared and you-”

“You are so fucking remarkable,” Katsuki said in a low, amazed voice, cutting her off. She squeaked, flushing a bright red from her chest to the top of her head, and Katsuki laughed softly.

“I-I—” Ochako stammered, pressing her hands to her flushed cheeks.
“You—”

Katsuki just watched her scramble for words, not bothering to smother the softness of his smile or the adoration in his lidded eyes. She couldn’t look at him for too long, growing more flustered by the second, and he was beyond charmed.

If she needed him to be the one to say it, to be blunt and get rid of any uncertainty, then far be it from him to deny her. Three years ago, she’d been the first to step up and meet him at his level.

Now? It was his turn to step up.

“Y-you must have hurt your head,” Ochako stammered, wriggling out of Katsuki’s arms and falling to her feet clumsily. She patted his chest around where Four-Eyes had kicked him, seemed to think better of it, then instead twisted her hands in the hem of her shirt. “You need to see Recovery Girl! Right now! U-urgently!”

As she babbled, Katsuki looked up past all the celebrating students and met Aizawa’s eye. After a moment of silent conversation, the teacher sighed and rolled his eyes before turning on his heel and facing the other way. When All Might began to ask him why he had turned, Aizawa grabbed the taller hero by the chin and jerked his head around in the opposite direction too.

Katsuki owed that man a fucking fruit basket. Or a drink. Both, probably.

With that out of the way, Katsuki turned back to a babbling Ochako. She had taken a few stumbling steps back, but was still well within range, and it took barely any effort at all for him to reach out and fist his hand in the fabric of her shirt just above her stomach. She yelled as he tugged her in, his hand trapped between them as they stood pressed together from knee to chest. Ochako’s eyes had gone impossibly huge as she stared up at him, suddenly mute.

He could feel her heart pounding.

“I’m going to kiss you now,” Katsuki said, voice low and only for her. “Then you’re going to throw me at a wall and do that again. And then I’m going to kiss you again. And maybe, one day, when I’m dead, I’ll have had enough and I’ll stop. Fair?”

Ochako stammered up at him, face flushed and eyes big and dark, but her hands had fisted into his own tank top - caught somewhere around his stomach from when she leapt at him - and she had gone onto her toes. Leaning ever so tantalizingly closer, her breath warm in contrast with her ever-chilly fingers.

“Fair?” Katsuki asked again. This time he ducked closer, their foreheads pressed against each other. He barely recognized his own voice, so full of longing and adoration and something that came deep from the back of his chest, but it seemed to finally get through whatever was happening in Ochako’s head.

She smiled at him.

“Do I get a kiss for every time I pull you back?” she asked in a soft, breathless whisper that Katsuki felt echoing throughout his entire body. Maybe that would explain the tremoring.

Katsuki shrugged. “It’s a start.”

And then he was kissing her, and for the second time that day, he felt the world pull to a complete, weightless, halt.

Fuck, she was soft, he thought as his lips pressed against her own; impossibly soft and full and warm in contrast to his. He had to let go of her shirt to get a proper hold of her, his hand pressing firm against the curve of her back, but it was so worth feeling Ochako melt just a little more into him. Her own hands had found the back of his neck and he could feel her round nails pressed into his skin and under his hair, claiming him and anchoring him all at once.

She could scratch her name on his forehead for all he cared. Fuck, she was already written on his heart; the only difference would be he wasn’t the only one who saw it.

Distantly, Katsuki was aware of the volume of their cheering classmates triple, but he really could not give less of a fuck. Especially not while Ochako was tapping the back of her own hand and kicking up off the ground so that she was the one leaning over him, pulling

him ever closer as her lips floated over his to leave impossibly light little kisses that made him want to detonate himself. Barely sparing a moment to show the class his middle finger, Katsuki wrapped both arms around Ochako's waist and felt his knees shake when he felt the smooth skin of her back under his palm. Shit, when had her shirt ridden up?

"Ten seconds, then I turn around," Aizawa's bored voice drawled, and Katsuki pulled back just enough to catch his breath. He wasn't even sure when he'd closed his eyes, but when he opened them to find Ochako beaming down at him, haloed by the mid-afternoon sun with her brown eyes impossibly warm and dark, Katsuki nearly gave in and let his knees fail.

Ochako giggled, scratching that one spot on his neck that he had long ago labeled as 'her spot'. "So, how far do I have to throw you to get kissed like that again?" she asked breathlessly, and Katsuki laughed, squeezing her hips.

"Cheeks, you are stuck with me either way, how far *can you* throw me?"

"Oh, *bet.*"

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Merry Crisis this did not take me over a year

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

By the end of class, Ochako had only been kissed by Katsuki once.

Not that their first kiss was in any way lacking, of course. Even just the memory of it made her lightheaded in the best kind of way. Her cheeks were still flushed hours later, and every time she made eye contact with any of her friends, they'd grin and she'd burst into nervous giggles. Reassured that no, she had not hallucinated Katsuki kissing her in front of the entire class. She wasn't going to wake up in Recovery Girl's infirmary from a wild, impossible dream. It was real. It had happened.

The taste of sugar and smoke that lingered at the corner of her lips was a hundred percent real and a hundred percent Bakugou Katsuki.

It was almost more life-changing than the evolution her Quirk had just gone through.

They had spent the rest of class being supervised by Aizawa, with a medicine ball that Ochako had removed the gravity from as the Dynamight stand-in. She'd throw the ball at Katsuki and he'd spike it in a random direction, and she would stop it in its tracks before it hit whatever was next in their path. It took a few tries (and a collision with the back of Sero's head that made Jirou choke on her own laughter), but she was eventually able to replicate the 'tethering' as Aizawa called it. Soon she was doing it consistently and with shorter and shorter periods of delay, and Katsuki's grin just grew wider and wider.

She even got to chuck him at another wall a few times, grasping onto his center of gravity before slingshotting him towards whatever target Aizawa called out. Which was usually a classmate.

By the end of class, Katsuki had missile-tackled four of their classmates, cackling like a madman as Aizawa reminded them to keep up their guards for surprise attacks.

When they had been dismissed, Katsuki had been making a beeline for

her before being pulled away by an oblivious All Might, checking in on him and his bruised chest and rambling about something Ochako couldn't make out. Katsuki's eyes never left hers, and his grin was full of promise as he held up four fingers. Even remembering it now, almost two hours later in the safety of her own space, Ochako hid her blushing cheeks behind her hands.

It had taken her nearly an hour to break away from her female classmates in the locker room, all buzzing with excitement for both of the earth-shattering developments in her life and demanding play-by-plays of both saving Katsuki from becoming a pancake and getting the breath kissed out of her before over half of their graduating class. When she did escape the locker rooms, her other friends were there waiting for her, Deku scooping her up into an excited, weepy hug and rambling about all the uses her new technique could have in combat and rescue as Tenya tried to lecture her about PDA. Shouto gave her a thumbs up and a wink when she made eye contact with him, her laughter interrupting both of the other boys, and she walked back to the dorms with them, Shouto and Deku both leaning in and listening to her retelling of events with rapt attention.

Despite having repeated the story several times by the time she made it back to her dorm, only *then* did what happened to her really sink in. Katsuki had *kissed her!* And she'd *kissed him back!!!* Ochako sat out on her balcony with her hands pressed to her mouth as she tried to memorize every detail of that moment. How his hair had felt under her fingers, or the way he gasped a little every time their lips broke apart. How rough and warm his hands had felt sliding across her back.

Most of all, that familiar look of his that he seemed to save just for her. The one that always made her heart squeeze almost too tight in her chest. This time, though, he kept nothing hidden. There was just pride and adoration, burning hot in his eyes and to the tips of her toes, as he told her "*You are so fucking remarkable.*"

She could hear her phone buzzing on her desk back inside her dorm, but she needed a few more moments to process the events of the afternoon. Mina or Tsu or whoever would still be there when she was done watering her plants and squealing into her hands at an obnoxious pitch.

(Ochako had already put on her half-gloves the moment she had gotten back to her locker at the end of class, *very* aware that without them, she would likely be floating somewhere above UA with no hope of being pulled back down.)

As she moved about her small potted garden, Ochako found that she couldn't wipe the smile from her face no matter how hard she tried. Everything seemed so much brighter and happier since the moment Katsuki had pulled her against him at Ground Beta. There was a knock on her door, and Ochako braced herself for another interrogation. "Door's open!" she hollered, showering over her potted flowers with her makeshift watering bottle.

An overwhelming sense of deja-vu washed over her as she heard heavy steps making their way to her balcony, and Ochako felt a shiver run up her spine. She paused, biting her lip to hold in her embarrassed, giddy laughter, before turning towards the sliding door.

Her resistance didn't last, and the sight of a smirking Katsuki leaning in her doorway wearing the shirt she'd bought him with the sleeves rolled up and his hands shoved in the pockets of his jeans had her snorting with laughter.

"You wore pants!" she exclaimed between giggles, and the unamused look he shot her had her laughing even harder.

"As opposed to fucking what!?" he asked, crossing his arms with a tilt of his head.

"Another pair of sweatpants? With your toes out, like a harlot," Ochako teased. Her laughter turned into a shriek as Katsuki stormed across the short bit of distance between them, crowding her against the balcony.

"You fuckin' brat," he growled with a grin. His arms were braced on either side of her body and heat was radiating off of him like a furnace. The sun had already started to set and the temperature had dipped, and Ochako wanted to wrap herself in his body-heat like a blanket. She stayed pressed against the railing instead, fighting giggles as she looked up at his face. "Here I am, trying to set the damn mood, and you blew it!"

Her heart tripped in her chest, and her smile pulled bright and wide across her lips. "Oooh, a mood!" she asked, voice lilting. "What's the occasion?" Ochako couldn't stop her shoulders from wiggling in anticipation if she tried, and Katsuki watched the motion with that open look of adoration from Ground Beta. The same look he'd given her the first time he showed up on her balcony wearing that shirt, cranked up to a hundred. If she'd thought her heart was at risk of failure before, she clearly had no idea what her partner was capable

of.

His broad hand came up to grip the back of her neck, his touch somehow soft and unyielding at the same time, and she *melted*. That crooked, satisfied smile was back on his lips - lips she was now intimately aware of. "I think I owe you a certain something," Katsuki said, his voice low and heavy in his chest.

Ochako barely bit back a lovesick sigh. "Just one?"

"To start."

And then he was kissing her again, and it was just as perfect and impossible as the first time.

He didn't waste any time pulling her against the line of his body, his free arm wrapped around her waist and digging into the curve of her hip possessively. Her arms ducked under his so she could clutch at his shirt near his shoulders. Their lips moved together as if they'd done so a million times before, every bit of their hard-earned synchronicity as heroes coming through in this intimate moment.

Like the first kiss, this one seemed to go on forever and somehow not nearly long enough, and when he pulled back just enough for them to catch their breaths, she was nearly dizzy from it all. Katsuki left his forehead pressed to hers, his eyes still closed like he wanted to linger in the moment a little longer, and it made her *ache*.

Fuck. She wanted this for the rest of her life.

"That's one," she gasped, and it was enough to get Katsuki to open his eyes and grin at her.

"It's a start," he repeated before leaning in for the next.

It was Tsuyu's voice in her head that had her slipping her fingers between their lips at the last second, his lips pressing soft to her fingerpads. "Wait," Ochako whispered. "We should talk, first."

She hated herself for saying it, for not letting his passion sweep her away. But now that she had a taste - literally - of what could be hers, she knew this conversation couldn't be put off any more. Katsuki loved her, and he wanted her, but that meant nothing if he wasn't *in love* with her. If this was just a temporary fix, to let off a bit of pressure now that their finals were behind them and their fates hung in the air, she had to stop it now. Before her stupid heart ran away

from her and she couldn't get it back.

If Katsuki was disappointed, he didn't let it show. Instead, he nodded, pulling back just enough to brace one arm against the railing and tuck his other hand back in his pocket. He wasn't touching her, but he *loomed*, and Ochako could still feel his touch on her like a brand. "We should," he agreed, expression serious.

Ochako nodded, pushing her bangs back from her face. She had been practicing this conversation since the gala, walking in circles around her dorm as she struggled to find the right words to say. Every bit of dialogue she'd crafted in those moments seemed to have vacated the moment her brain realized this was for real.

"Right. Okay. Um, should I start? Or do you—"

"I'm in love with you," Katsuki said, his voice even and easy as if he were telling her the time and not confessing his love to her. Ochako stared up at him in shock, vaguely aware her mouth was hanging open.

He kept going, clearly on a roll. "Have been for the better part of a year, now. Probably longer, if we want to be pedantic about it. Regardless, I am, and I'm fuckin' done with taking the coward's way out instead of telling you. If you need me to step up and say it first, I can do that. It's worth the risk."

Goddamnit, Tsuyu was always right. If she had known that the conversation would be this straightforward and easy, Ochako would have done this months ago.

Katsuki took her continued silence as a sign to keep going. "And before you say anything, you need to know that your answer won't change anything about our partnership," he said, ducking closer so they were standing eye to eye. "Whether you reciprocate or not, we're still going to be the baddest pair of motherfuckers to touch the hero game. And I still want to be your roommate. Your response just determines whether the second room is yours or an office."

Ochako huffed a laugh, smiling at him fondly. "Wow, you weren't even going to give me the master bedroom?" she asked, trying to lighten the mood. But her voice was too soft and breathless, and she could see a bit of the tension leave his body. She hadn't even realized how hard he was gripping the railing until she noticed his straining grip loosen just a bit.

"We both know I need the en suite more than you, Cheeks," Katsuki said with a shrug, and she laughed as she threw her arms around his neck, clinging tightly to him. He didn't hesitate to hug her back, keeping her pressed tightly against him as her feet dangled off the floor. The shirt she'd bought him was soft to the touch, some of the crispness of the silk softening with a few wears, and if he hadn't just shaken up her entire life, she might have had something poetic to say about that. Instead, they stood there like that for a few moments; the world passing around them while they enjoyed the peace of the moment in their own little bubble, before Ochako pressed a soft kiss to his jaw.

She pressed another to his cheek then started sprinkling them all over the side of his face she could reach. He relaxed into her hold, one of the toughest men she knew going impossibly soft all over, and Ochako knew that this moment would be one she'd look back on for the rest of her life.

"I love you too," she said soft against the corner of his mouth, and his whole body sagged into her hold with relief. "So, so much, Katsuki."

She could feel a shiver go through him, and his grip tightened for a moment before he let her go. His hands drifted to her hips and he gave her a squeeze there. "Just to be sure, you mean that romantically, right?" he teased.

"Oh, get down here, you dork," Ochako said with a laugh, pulling him to her height so she could kiss him with every bit of her joy and excitement. Their teeth clashed a little, her movement a little too enthusiastic, but Katsuki just laughed and met her with the same amount of enthusiasm. This time, when the kiss ended, Ochako was nearly bent back parallel to the floor, only her one leg hooked around his and the grip he had on her middle keeping her from falling on her back. They were both panting, breathless by the end of it, and the grin Katsuki gave her did things to her heart (and the rest of her body) that sweet little first-year UA student Uraraka Ochako could have never imagined.

To think, three years ago, she was so sure she knew exactly what love looked and felt like. This was nothing like that. This was the relief of a river rushing back to sea after the dam had been blown up. An earthshattering boom and a release of years of tension and doubt; an empty, yawning space in her chest that was being flooded with joy.

She threw her head back with a laugh, and when she pulled herself

back up, Katsuki was giving her that look of adoration that made her into a pile of goo at his feet. The light from the setting sun shone golden on his skin and hair, and his eyes were even more of a molten, smoldering red than before.

"I'm not ever going to get used to this, am I?" Ochako asked, giddy at the thought, and Katsuki smirked.

"Not if I can help it," he promised before scooping her up into his arms. Ochako squeaked, clinging to his torso as he carried her back inside her dorm.

"Katsuki!! What are you doing!?"

"I've got one more kiss left for earlier," he said casually, like he wasn't carrying a whole-ass hero over his shoulders. The mere idea of it flustered her a little. "Gotta make it count."

"You're acting like it's the last kiss you'll ever get from me!" Ochako said. He took that moment to toss her onto her bed, her many homemade throw pillows scattering to the wind and to the ground, abandoning her to her partner's mercy. She grinned up at him and reached out to grab onto his collar, pulling him down over her. "What did you say, earlier? *'I'll have had enough when I'm dead'* ?"

Katsuki leaned over her, his knee braced near her hip. "I never said you wouldn't have to work for them, angel," he said with a smirk, and Ochako knew that what he was asking of her was no less than what he had always expected of her. To not only meet his expectations, but to far surpass them.

And as she rose to meet him halfway and their lips pressed together, Ochako realized something else. Mina had also been right, that day in the mall.

She was girlfriend material.

Chapter End Notes

Holy shit we did it!!! So much has happened since I started this fic and I'm so glad to see it finally completed! This has been a huge labor of love, and I have to give a shoutout to all of my friends in the Kacchako fandom that helped me get this done (namely those special individuals - you know who you are - that threatened to take my toes if I didn't finish this fic lol). The response to this fic has been wild and I can't thank you all enough

for reading and joining me on this journey.

Now, that's not to say this story is done! I've got two sequels planned for this fic; one that's a one-shot and another that should be about the same length that takes place when they're all pro-heroes and will focus on another couple that was mostly on the sidelines for BF-GF Things. Plus, I've got a few more kacchako fics up and more coming (y'all are *not ready* for Firecracker). I also write Disney fics, so if you feel like getting dragged down that particular rabbit hole, I'm your gal!

You can find me on twitter at @uravitynogravit and thank you again for all of your love and support. Happy holidays and a happy new year, everyone ❤️

End Notes

Real talk I pretend that this is a little more serious than Yes or No, but the line that inspired the whole fic was the '*I could guess his cup size*' one so like,,,,,,, it's not That Much More Serious

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